



## THE COUSINS AND THEIR FRIENDS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SYDNEY GREY," ETC.

## CHAPTER V.

## CASTLES IN AYRSHIRE.

MAGDA'S brothers and sisters were in the habit of complaining of her, that she was so wrapped up in her own thoughts, that she never saw what was passing under her eyes. And truly enough, when any little dispute arose in the family about what had been said or done a week or two before, it was quite in vain to appeal to her memory.

She had not seen, she had not heard, she could not remember. It might have been Tommy, or it might have been Ratcliffe who gave that final kick to the terrestrial globe, that carried away the whole of New Zealand, and lifted the Sandwich Islands up to the equator. She did not think it mattered, neither would she undertake to say whether the accident happened on the day when it was her business to put the globes away, or when it was Kathleen's.

This want of recollection certainly saved Magda from being drawn into the lengthy disputes about who was and who was not to blame, in which it must be confessed the younger Lords wasted a good deal of time every day; but it was rather inconvenient to Beatrice, who was anxious to be just in her awards of praise and blame to the younger ones, and it was extremely provoking to Kathleen and Tommy. They always knew perfectly well what they had and what they had not done; and as they were very honest in confessing all the neglect, and all the mischief for which they felt themselves responsible, they did not like having in addition to share the general blame which Ratty's shiftiness and Magda's inaccuracy threw upon the whole school-room party.

Tommy never took part in a dispute for long together. His little sharp clever face grew sullen when he had been contradicted once or twice, and he used to retire to his carpenter's bench, and mutter to his wood and his nails, that it was very easy for people to say they

forgot; he only wished things could speak and tell who kicked them, and then there would be a chance of coming at the truth.

Kathleen on these occasions generally talked and argued till her face grew very red, and her voice husky, or (if it was lesson time) till Mademoiselle Larkerstrom interposed with a little verse or an anecdote from history, to prove the unbecomingness of anger to a woman, which Kathleen had to write out on her slate after school hours were over.

But though Kathleen sometimes felt very angry, she never allowed herself to think, as Tommy did, that Magda and Hugh could help forgetting; and it made her very unhappy when either of them let fall a word which made it seem as if they could have given a more exact answer had it pleased them to do so.

The strange thing about Magda's memory was, that though it seldom enabled her to recall circumstances concerning herself or the other children on which she was questioned, it was very tenacious of remarks or parts of conversations which fell from the elders in her presence, when she was not supposed to be heeding them. She never knew what had happened, but if any plan for the future was being discussed, which the elders of the family wished to keep to themselves, it was always, strangely enough, Magda who found it out.

She did not talk openly of her discoveries, as Kathleen would have done, but the knowledge she had picked up oozed out gradually in careless observations made to one and another, till through her every one in the house came to know what was going on.

It was in this piecemeal fashion that the news of their intended removal from London to Caergebi reached the young Lords. Their father had not intended them to know anything about it till his plans were fully matured. He knew the "dont-much-matter-for-the-present spirit that is apt to come over people when they are unsettled by a prospect of change, which after all may not come; and he was anxious that the children should not be tempted to spend the remaining weeks of the summer term in an unsatisfactory, careless temper of mind, which would make the settling in a new place, or the return to their old prospects, equally difficult to them hereafter.

Magda did not exactly mean to pry into her father's secrets, but she chanced one day to overhear a few words read aloud from one of her aunt's letters, which roused her curiosity, and afterwards she could not

(or thought she could not) help taking silent note of every unusual circumstance, till first a vague expectation that something unusual was going to happen, and then a near guess at the truth came to her. It had quite as bad an effect as her father had anticipated. She pictured the new sort of life they were all to lead in the country, without any lessons or any constraint she supposed; herself being a sort of joint head of the house and ruler over the little ones with Beatrice, till all her present occupations and pleasures looked extremely useless and uninteresting. What did it matter about satisfying her masters, or pleasing mademoiselle, if she were soon to have nothing further to do with them, she asked herself. She would study all alone, and get on famously by-and-by, she resolved; but just now, while there was so much to conjecture and dream about, she need not give more of her thoughts to her lessons than was absolutely necessary for slipping through her classes without remark. This desultory unsettled feeling filtered down through Magda to the rest of the school-room party, before she knew that she had said or done anything to inspire it.

It was difficult for Kathleen to persevere in her resolution to keep everything in the school-room in the exact order their mother had liked, when Magda was always saying, "Oh never mind; the book closet will have to be routed out thoroughly some day soon, just throw the exercise books in anyhow to day; I want you to run down stairs, and look into the letter-box and see if the letter the postman left just now was for Beatrice, and if it has a Caergebi post mark on it. If it is from Aunt Lucy, we shall perhaps all hear something;" or "don't make such a fuss looking for our drawing cases, Kathey, we must just use Hugh's pencils to day, I dare say ours will be found in the turn out that will come by-and-by."

Ratcliffe and Tommy were very quick to catch up such phrases, and "Magda says it does not much matter what we do for the rest of this half," came to be a standing excuse for all manner of misdemeanours, and for more thorough idleness in school and out, than had ever prevailed before.

Hugh could not be coaxed to listen complacently to Magda's perpetual conjectures about the coming "catastrophe," as she chose to call it; nor would he share her delight when the prospect of their going to live in Wales dawned upon her. He did not like the idea of leaving school, and he chose to look upon his removal as a sort of punishment



or disgrace, which he fancied was put upon him without his deserving it. He would have reconciled himself to the change without much difficulty if he had heard of it first from his father, accompanied by the explanation of his reasons for making it, which his father would kindly have given him. As it was, the mystery Magda made about it, and the unlikely, uncomfortable schemes she pictured out in their private talks together, and told to him, as if she had good reason for thinking that their father was really meditating them, roused and kept up the discontented brooding state of temper, which was Hugh's great failing, and determined him to see nothing but disadvantages in the new prospects. "Oh! he should hate it all," he declared. "A year ago, while Cyril was living at home, it might not have been so bad, but to be stuck down close to Carnellen now, with no one to speak to but Harry Mannering, who would go on a whole morning digging up filthy cockles on the sands, and expect every one to be as much pleased with them as he was; or that little prig Arthur, who would run after a fellow all day, boring him with questions, and never understand when one wanted to get rid of him. Cyril might bear it, and pretend to like it, but Hugh was sure he never could. Aunt Lucy, Oh! of course there was nothing to be said against Aunt Lucy, only if people expected that they were to talk to her, or let her make up to them for ——." But here Hugh always broke down, and Magda had to rack her brains to think of some new advantage to bring forward.

Ratty pictured himself galloping about all day long on a frisky pony, with perhaps a gun in his hand, and a loaded pistol or two stuck in his belt, which he might fire off at any chance live thing that came in his way; while Tommy cherished the thought of a lonely Robinson Crusoe cave on the Caergebi beach, where he might live alone on oysters, without any one to interfere with his contrivances, or ever tell him that his hands and face wanted washing.

Kathleen wondered whether the "catastrophe," of which Magda spoke so mysteriously, might not mean some such decided change of circumstances as occurred to Beauty's family in the fairy tale; and whether, when they all went down to live in the country, she should not be called on to exert herself in domestic labour, after the pattern of that heroine. If she could have been sure that Ratty would like following the plough as much better than learning Latin, as she should prefer

milking cows and feeding chickens, to practising scales on the piano, she would have been very happy in the prospect.

Her scales did not get practised at all carefully while she thought of this, and she comforted herself for the dilapidated state into which all the schoolroom possessions fell, by reflecting, that since there could only be room in "the cottage" for absolutely necessary furniture, the books and globes, and drawing materials, would certainly all have to be left behind.

While the children's thoughts were thus occupied, their father's negotiations with the landlord of the country house near Caergebi progressed slowly. Difficulties arose from time to time, which made him half disposed to give up his plan of going to reside there. The season wore on, and the last weeks of the half-year arrived before anything was settled. The approach of the half-yearly examination and distribution of prizes gave a new turn to the children's thoughts. Hugh, who had worked with less pleasure since the probability of his not returning to King's after the holidays had been put into his head, grew feverishly eager to make up by intense application during the last fortnight for the days when ill-humour had made him careless. Even Ratty thought ruefully of the long list of impositions and well-merited reprimands that might be brought against him, and considered whether it might not be worth while to make a great push to attain a better position in his form before the serious day of reckoning came, when his father would have proof of his shortcomings actually before his eyes. Till he fairly set about trying to perform a task it was Ratty's way to think very slightly of its difficulties, and be quite confident of his own powers of conquering them if he chose. He always told Katty that it was just a chance, and principally owing to the *spite* the masters entertained against him, that he did not climb up to Hugh's place at the head of the upper fourth form instead of remaining nearly at the bottom of the lower division; and he was fond of holding out hopes of a time coming when "old Ward and his father and all the fellows would just see." Not, he explained, that he had any intention of sapping for a whole half like Hugh, or that he seriously wished to vex plodding old Hugh by getting before him. "Only it would be fun now, would it not, Katty," he asked, "after old Ward had been jawing at one the whole year for idleness to step in at the exam. and carry off all the prizes. I should like to see old Ward's face when he

heard me called up to take a prize. I believe he'd be half-mad with mortification, he does so spite me." "It's very horrid of him if he does," Kathleen declared; "but Beatrice does not quite believe about masters spiting boys, and Cyril used to say it was nonsense that they ever do. However, whether it would vex Mr. Ward or not, I wish of all things that you would try to get a prize, Ratty. You have said every half-year that you would try for one, and nothing has ever turned up yet that you have thought it worth while to get. Of course it is too late for the form prize, but there is the Latin composition prize that all the fourth form may try for. Hugh said, when I asked him, that of course it was not quite impossible for you to get it, and you say yourself that you could do the verses easily. Do set to work this afternoon and try, dear Ratty. I should like to see you walk up to the table just once as Hugh has done so often; and you know this examination is the last you will ever have. Magda is nearly sure that the catastrophe will come before the holidays, and after that there will be no more going to school for any of us."

Ratcliffe, who was just then occupied in searching among the heap of rubbish in the "hole" for a lost leaf of his *Gradus*, sprang up as Kathleen said the last words, and executed a series of capers that brought half the contents of the overloaded shelves about his ears. "No more school, no more beastly verses, no more jawing from old Ward; if one could but be certain, I should jump out of my skin for joy."

"Oh, but you'd better not; it's a great secret, of course," said Kathleen, gravely; "catastrophes always are till they happen. Nobody is supposed to know that they are coming; and we ought not, only Magda says it is impossible for her quite to shut her ears and eyes."

"How horrid it would be if it turned out all one of Magda's crams, she has such a way of inventing things herself and then believing them. Don't you remember she persuaded you once that there was a fairy sort of princess living up in our attics, hiding away from traitors, or something of that kind. And you believed her till she got to believe herself, and you used to make all your cakes and sweet-meats into parcels and poke them up through the trap-door for your precious princess to eat; and the rats gnawed them, as Cyril saw, when he climbed through the trap-door to look, and found nothing in the attics whatever but the fire-escape and an old broom."

"Ah, that was a terrible disappointment about the princess. Magda and I did so hope we should rescue her," said Kathey sorrowfully. "Magda does not like to have it talked of even now. She wrote a long, beautiful piece of poetry about the 'Imprisoned Princess,' and Cyril found it and read it, and made such a joke of it."

"Magda wrote poetry to an old broom, and you gave all your cakes to the rats, just like you both," said Ratty scornfully. "But I hope this catastrophe is not such another piece of moonshine. It would be horrid to have to go on again at school in the old way after the holidays. I should hate it worse than ever now that you have put the thought of leaving into my head. Living at that farm-house you have described to me, and driving horses about, and shooting, will be such awful fun."

"But I am not quite sure about the farm-house, and the ploughing and milking," said Kathleen. "The catastrophe may not mean that; it is only that I hope it will."

"At all events, you're sure it means leaving London and school, and fusty old Ward, so here goes." And Ratty slipped his foot under his dilapidated Gradus, held it balanced for a minute on the point of his boot, then sent it spinning up to the ceiling, and laughed to see the loose leaves flying out on every side, and Kathleen running wildly about the room to catch them. One or two, in spite of her care, floated into the water jug, and the time lost in drying them and finding their right places in the Gradus again, left Ratty a very few minutes only to bestow on his latin composition that afternoon.

"It was a pity," Kathey observed, when she peeped over his shoulder just before going down to tea, and saw that only one line of the poem he had to translate into Latin verse, and which was to be given in the next morning to compete for the prize, was as yet written down on his paper. "Hugh has all but finished his translation, and Magda is to write it out fairly after tea, that he may look comfortably at it. I wish you would get on with yours; the English lines are very pretty, I have read them before. On 'Dido listening to Æneas.' Papa gave that poem to Cyril to translate into Latin verse, and he did it in half an hour. An elegant translation, I remember papa said it was, and Beatrice kept it, and has it in her desk drawer among her treasures now. It was just a night or two before dear Cyril went away."

"We have leave to work after tea to-night, because it's our last



opportunity, you know," said Ratty. "I dare say I shall beat Hugh yet. He is such a slow coach. If Cyril did it in half an hour, of course I can do it in two hours, and time to spare. Hugh must lend me his Gradus, and then I shall have a chance of getting on; there's no making anything of this tattered old concern."

## CHAPTER VI.

THE MOTHER OF MISCHIEF IS NO BIGGER THAN A MIDGE'S WING.

THE Sergeant and Beatrice were dining from home that evening, so the children had the drawing-room to themselves after tea, with leave to bring their books down, as it was the boys' last evening of preparation before the trials began. Magda had her own anxieties just then, as well as the boys. She was a candidate for prizes in the French, German, and drawing classes she attended; and for the last ten days she had been too busy writing themes and touching up drawings to give much help in the wild searches for books and papers in which Hugh, Kathleen, and Ratty wasted half their afternoons. She generally contrived somehow or other to seize the book or drawing-board she wanted, and secure a corner to sit down in, and then she could go on working, even while Tommy was trying to drag her chair from under her, to see whether she was sitting on his slate pencil or not.

Of all the party, Ratty was that evening loudest in his entreaties for quiet and peace; yet, as usual, whatever disturbance there was came from him. The great thing in writing verses was, he assured Kathey, to get very thoroughly settled, and to work oneself up into the right mood. With this object in view, Ratty paced up and down the drawing room for a quarter of an hour. First, with his hands clasped together, knitted brow, and head raised a little on one side, looking so like the sergeant when he was supposed to be composing a speech, that even Magda could not help lifting up her head to laugh at him; then briskly, quarter-deck fashion, with arms folded and slightly rolling gait, like Uncle Charles; then tripping on the points of his toes, like M. Boulong, the French master, in a hurry to catch the last omnibus. No inspiration for his work was evoked by these efforts, however; and then Ratty discovered that he could always think best with his head downwards, and spent another quarter of an hour in

making an erection of sofa pillows and footstools, on which he could recline, with his feet level with the top of the piano, and his head on the floor.

"Eight o'clock," observed Hugh, just as Ratty was settled with his paper spread out before him, and his *Gradus* and dictionary by his side.

"Well, I've a full hour, and I'm going to begin in right earnest," said Ratty, "when I've given one more good stretch. Oh, Dido, Dido, Dido, you wretch! How I wish that Pygmalion had poisoned you, or that your fool of a husband's ghost had never sent you wandering off into Africa. Then there would never have been so many bothering poems written about you for one to translate from Latin into English, or from English into Latin. I should not have minded half as much if I had had to write an English poem out of my own head. I could have polished off a better set of verses than these in no time."

"When Dido found *Æneas* would not come, she wept in silence, and was Di-do-dum," quoted Hugh; "you never could have beaten that."

"Hold your tongue," said Ratty; "I really have begun now." Half a dozen words were written down on Ratcliffe's paper after this, and then there was such a long pause that Kathey, who had seated herself close by on the floor, in case of anything being wanted, began to fear that he had fallen asleep. By half past eight Hugh had finished his verses, and was asking Magda to find him a fair sheet of paper to copy them out upon. Magda, who was very much engrossed with a German exercise she was bent on finishing, took no notice of his request for some time, and then, when it only wanted ten minutes to bedtime, began hastily to turn all the scraps of paper from her writing case on to the floor for Hugh to choose from.

"It's very odd that one never can get quite a clean sheet of paper in this house," grumbled Hugh, picking up one after the other and finding that each was spoiled by an ink blot, or a verse of poetry, or the beginning of a translation scribbled somewhere.

The drawing room writing case was searched next, but Tommy had possessed himself of it during the early part of the evening, and covered every sheet it contained, with pictures of steam engines and of himself as a clever engine-man driving them.

"Ah, that was what kept him so quiet all the evening," sighed Kathleen, "I ought to have noticed what he was about." Ratty meanwhile with unusual alacrity, jumped up and brought Beatrice's

desk from the inner drawing room. "There's sure to be lots of clean paper here," he said, "and Beatrice would give some to Hugh, fast enough." "But she might not like us to open her desk," objected Kathleen; "besides it's locked, and I don't know where the key is."

"I do," said Magda quickly, "I'll run up to Beatrice's room and fetch it, I am sure she would let me."

Hugh was in too great a hurry to copy his verses to raise objections, but when Magda had unlocked the desk, and given him the paper, he was a little surprised to see that she did not immediately shut it again, but began to turn over some letters that lay under the blotting book. He looked up from his writing once, to say, "What *are* you doing Magda?" "Only putting the letters to rights," she answered; "I shall take the key up stairs when I go to bed. You had better write as quickly as you can Hugh, if you wish to copy your translation to night. I heard papa tell John to come in and turn off the gas at half past nine."

Hugh wrote for ten minutes as fast as fingers could move, and then a rustling of papers made him look up again. "Oh, I say, what are you two after?" he exclaimed, surprised to see Magda still before the open desk, with a half-unfolded letter in her hand, into which she was peeping, and Ratcliffe on his knees by the table, rummaging in the drawer of the desk, which he had pulled open unperceived by Magda.

Magda started, grew very red, and pushed Ratty angrily away from the drawer. "You naughty boy," she said, "how dare you open Bee's drawer? How vexed she would be if she could see you pulling her treasures about." "And how much would she like you to peep and pry into her letters. Come now, who began?" cried Ratty, clutching at a bundle of papers as he spoke, and possessing himself of the one he had previously half drawn out.

"I was not prying," said Magda hotly; "I was only looking at a sentence in one of Aunt Lucy's letters, of which Bee had read me nearly the whole before."

"Oh yes, I dare say," answered Ratty, "and I was only looking at something that Bee had shown me before. Come now, you'd better leave hold," he cried as Magda seized his arm and tried to get the paper from him. "I will have a look at this; you should not have begun pulling the papers about yourself, if you'd meant to make such a

fuss; I should never have thought of touching them if you had not set me the example." A struggle for the paper followed, Hugh sprang up hastily to interfere, his foot caught in the table cover, Ratty with Magda and Kathleen pursuing, ran against him, and among them all, the table cover was dragged down, and the contents of the table, ink-stand, desk, flower vases, books and papers, brought with a grand crash to the floor. A good deal of damage was done, and Magda was much frightened and very anxious to get the room restored to some sort of order, before their father and Beatrice returned. Hugh and Kathleen thought it would be best for them all to remain in the drawing room, confess each his or her share of blame, and get over the reprimand they knew they deserved that night, but Magda overruled their opinion; she said that their father had made a point of their going to bed at the usual hour, and she was sure he would be more displeased by disobedience in this matter, than by anything else. She preferred taking the explanation upon herself, she said, and was not afraid to bear the first brunt of blame. The younger ones yielded, and allowed themselves to be hurried up stairs, and then Magda set to work, with the help of one of the servants, to gather up the broken glass and wipe the ink stains from the carpet. Beatrice's desk had fallen on a sofa pillow, and suffered less than might have been expected. The contents of the upper divisions had not fallen out, only the bundles of old letters from the drawer had suffered from contact with the spilt ink. Magda wiped them carefully, and put them back as nearly as she could recollect in their former places. When she had locked the desk and restored it to its place on the side table, it came into her head to wonder whether the paper Ratcliffe had taken out had been replaced with the others. She searched under sofas and tables without seeing anything of it, and was on her way to the boys' room to ask Ratty if he remembered what he had done with it, when she heard her father's rap at the front door. At the same moment her eye fell on the key of Beatrice's desk, (lying on the drawing-room table) and she discovered suddenly that she did not at all like the thought of having to confess how it came there. She had just time to snatch it up, run to Beatrice's room, put it in its usual place on her ring-stand, and reach the drawing room again, before her father and sister mounted the stairs.

"You up still Magda?" her father said as soon as he saw her. "Yes,



dear Papa; I am very sorry, but I wanted to tell you something; I am sorry to say we have had an accident. Ratty snatched a paper, and while I was running after him to take it from him, we fell against Hugh, and between us dragged the cover off the table, and broke Uncle Charles's beautiful Japanese vases, and spilled the ink. I am very sorry for I am afraid it was a good deal my fault."

The Sergeant, who was not accustomed to trouble himself much about broken vases or spilt ink, was more pleased at the apparent candour of Magda's confession than vexed at the mischief done. He just glanced at the black stains on the carpet and table-cover and shrugged his shoulders.

"A pretty evening's work. You are a set of mischievous monkeys, the whole of you," he said; "but it strikes me that the person most to blame is Master Ratty. What business had he to snatch your paper from you. I must teach him better manners. Where is he?"

"Oh, no, dear papa, please don't be angry with Ratcliffe. He was very quiet all the evening till just that minute, and I did not mean that he was rude to me. We were all struggling together."

"Ah, well; only remember for the future that the drawing-room is not the place to struggle in. I can't have the whole house turned into a bear-garden."

"And Magda is a great deal too old to romp with the boys. I can't think how such a thing could happen," said Beatrice, who had taken up a corner of the spoilt tablecloth, and was looking at it ruefully.

"Too old, is she?" said the sergeant, half absently. "Ah, she wants closer looking after perhaps. Aunt Lucy will soon set all that to rights. Hum—ha—— Magda, my dear, you need not wait; go to bed. I am not angry with you—good night."

Half-way upstairs Magda came upon Ratcliffe, leaning over the bannisters, with his head turned towards the drawing-room door, in the attitude of listening.

"Why are not you in bed?" she asked sharply.

"I wanted to hear what Beatrice said about your opening her desk," he whispered; "and, I say, don't you know how to make up a good story for yourself, Miss Magda?"

Magda was habitually so inaccurate in her statements that she had hardly been aware how false a colouring she had given to the events

of the evening till she perceived how her account of them had struck Ratcliffe.

"I—I did not say anything that was not true," she faltered.

"Oh, no," said Ratty, "I think you managed particularly well. *Mum* is a first rate word, I always say, and I see you are of the same opinion." He put his finger to his nose, made a knowing grimace, and slipped back into his room again.

Magda was vexed with herself and provoked with Ratcliffe, and she felt she had not courage to follow him into his room and ask him before Hugh what he had done with the letter he had taken. She did not want Hugh to know exactly what she had said to her father, he had such very strict notions about telling things accurately; nor did she wish any dispute to arise which might bring Beatrice or her father upstairs, and lead to further investigations. She thought it best to let the matter pass. Perhaps Ratcliffe had slipped the paper back into the bundle again; at all events, she hoped it was not anything of value, and that if it were lost Beatrice would never miss it.

Hugh slept rather later than usual the next morning, and was a good deal vexed when he jumped out of bed to find that Ratcliffe had dressed and left the room without waking him.

He was not behind hand with his work like Ratty, but he would have been glad of all the extra time he could get that morning. He concluded that Ratty must have been up wonderfully early, for when he entered the school-room he found that he had left his books and was sitting astride Tommy's carpenter's bench, amusing himself by cutting notches in it with his penknife.

"What, have you finished your verses and copied them already, Ratty?" he asked.

"Bother the rotten stuff," answered Ratty, making as he spoke a fresh dig into the hard wood, and breaking the point of his knife in drawing it out.

Hugh sat down and finished the copy in which he had been interrupted the evening before; and when he had done he could not resist scanning his verses aloud to hear how they sounded.

Ratty left off chipping the board to listen, and when Hugh stopped he said quickly, "They're not so good as—as they might be. I could show you several words that don't sound right."

"If you know so well how the lines ought to go, why don't you

finish your own?" asked Hugh. "There would be a great deal more use in that than in finding fault with mine."

"How do you know I have not finished my own?" said Ratty.

"Why, when I asked you, you said bother the rotten stuff."

"It's all rotten together, yours and mine and everybody else's," said Ratty, "only I never said I had not finished my lines, that's all."

Hugh read his translation once more, folded the paper, and wrote his motto outside. "Have you thought of a motto for yours, Ratty? and what is it?" he asked.

"All right, mind your own business," grumbled Ratty. "There! this disgusting knife of mine has snapped again, and I gave two shillings for it. Beastly shame of shopkeepers to sell such things."

The bell rang for family prayers at this moment. Hugh gathered up his own papers, and finding some loose sheets scribbled over in Ratcliffe's hand writing among them, he was just going to place them in Ratty's writing book which lay on the table, when to his surprise, Ratty sprang up with one bound from the bench to the table, and pushed him roughly away.

"You just please to let my writing case alone," he exclaimed, looking curiously red and startled, "I won't have my things meddled with."

"Who ever does meddle with your things, I should like to know, except when they happen to be in the way?" said Hugh. "I can't think what's the row with you this morning, Ratty, you seem to be as rusty as an old nail."

"I hear our father's step on the stairs; we had better go down," observed Ratty, still however keeping the writing case shut close with one hand, while he took the loose sheets from Hugh with the other; Hugh ran down without further remark, but instead of following him, Ratty turned to the table, put the writing case down, opened it, and took out two papers. He held them a moment together, as if he were going to tear them across, and then he seemed to change his mind. Rapidly glancing first at one and then at the other, he folded the freshest looking carefully, and placed it in the pocket of the writing case; the second smaller sheet he twisted and screwed up into the smallest space it could be made to fill, and then glanced round the room as if in search of a safe hiding place to bestow it in.

An old China figure of a mandarin, which opened at the head and served as a sort of box, stood on the school-room chimney-piece. Ratty

went up to it, took off its head, pulled out a handful of odds and ends, bits of slate pencils, almond shells, dolls' sashes, with which it was crammed, pushed the paper pellet he had made down to the furthest corner of the Chinaman's right foot, covered it with rubbish, and was just fitting the old man's head on to his shoulders again, when Kathleen's voice called him from the door. "Ratty, we are waiting prayers for you," she said. "Dear me, how I startled you! you nearly let Yeh's head fall, and Bee would have been sorry if you had smashed him, for he belongs to Cyril you know."

"I'm ready, go along; you go into the dining room first," said Ratcliffe quickly. Kathleen thought he might be in some fear of receiving a reproof from their father for his share in last night's mischief, and was less surprised than she would otherwise have been, at the cloudy look that remained on his face all breakfast time.

The sergeant opened and read his large budget of letters, and glanced down the newspaper while he took his tea and toast with his usual pre-occupied air. He seemed to have forgotten the children's misdoings on the previous evening as completely as possible, but just as the boys were leaving the room, he suddenly laid down the newspaper and called after them. "Oh! by-the-way, come back, I have a word to say to you Ratty. I met Mr. Ward, your form master, last night, and he spoke to me about you. He says he is convinced you could get on much faster than you do, if you would give your mind to your work. You have plenty of ability he says, and it is nothing but sheer idleness and carelessness that keeps you back. Now I do hope that you have determined to do your best at this examination. I shall expect to hear that you have taken a fair place. I shall know now that it is your own fault if you do not, and I shall be much disappointed and displeased. Cyril and Hugh have always done themselves credit. I should have thought you would have been ashamed to contrast so unfavorably with them. Pray do let me hear some good of you for once."

No answer was expected, or at least Ratcliffe attempted none. The sergeant returned to his newspaper again, and Ratty walked off. He shut the door of the dining room quietly, for the sergeant permitted no angry slamming of doors where he was, but when he had dragged Kathleen with him into the little back parlour, and kicked to the door, his smothered indignation burst forth.



"There now you see," he cried, "was there ever anything on earth so spiteful? you tried to persuade me that he did not spite me, and now you see."

"Papa spite you! Oh, Ratty, what can you mean?" exclaimed Kathleen aghast.

"Nonsense, of course I meant old Ward. I wish I had his old black wig here, would not I kick it to pieces!—that he should go and tell Papa that I have plenty of ability, just on purpose to make him expect me to take a higher place in the form than I can possibly get, and be angry with me for failing. There never was anything so spiteful. It was just the worst thing he could have said about me."

"Oh, Ratty, do you think so. Dear me if any one had said that I had plenty of ability, I think I should have been so pleased. But, perhaps, it's true about you, and if Papa asked Mr. Ward, he was obliged to say it."

"Oh well, if you are going to take old Ward's part against me, I've done with you Kathey. All I can say is that if every one is to set to work and be as spiteful to me as they can, I don't see how I am to help being driven to do things."

Kathleen was going to ask what sort of things, but Beatrice opened the back-parlour door, and called Ratcliffe to tell him it was time to set off for school.

[*To be continued.*]

## LITTLE JOHNNY.

BY SIDNEY DARTL.

Those only are the brave who keep their ground,  
And keep it to the last.—*Blair.*

EVERYBODY in Harmouth knew Little Johnny, with his crooked back and tiny crutch, with which he could get over the ground a good deal faster than most other people who had free use of their legs. A great favourite was he with the bluff, weather-beaten beachmen, who often used to take him out with them in their shore-boats to the luggers when they were bringing their night's catching ashore. Then

they used to make him sing, for he had a capital voice, and had learned to give out the "Death of Nelson" and "Tom Bowling" with nautical emphasis and spirit not to be expected in a child of ten. Standing on the shore you could hear his notes sounding over the water, and presently the shouts and hurrahs of his audience when he came to a conclusion. Johnny had no mother; she had long been dead, having only lived to bring her child into the world, and then passed quietly away as if in a peaceful sleep. The only vestige that remained to him of her was a green mound under the great yew tree in the corner of Harmouth Churchyard, and there every Sunday after the morning service, he and his father would be found hand-in-hand, silent and sad. For though he had lost his wife close on half a score years, Joe Barton, rough and iron-hearted as he was, had not forgotten her who for one brief twelve months made life sunshine to him. "Poor little woman," he would say, turning away; and as he passed through the gate that led out of the resting-place of the dead a great salt tear, as big as a pebble, would force its way out, and slowly creep down his brown cheek. He and Johnny lived in a comfortable cottage outside the town, for Joe had been a successful man; from a fisherman he had gradually become part owner of a lugger, then sole proprietor, and then at last had no less than three boats of his own. So in course of time he secured a very nice little nest-egg, which he invested in the shares of the county bank, and then having laboured long and well, retired to rest him for the remainder of his days. The bank had a local branch at Harmouth, and most of the fishermen and inhabitants deposited their money there. Joe always had an intense love of the sea. He was wont to say "That it did his heart good to hear the waves, and that they used to talk to him for all the world like human beings." When he gave up fishing he had built a small pleasure-boat, which was christened with great ceremony *The Saucy Jack*, and a smart, trim little craft she was, with sailing powers something perfectly miraculous. All through the summer she was kept fully occupied, and heartrending were the appeals Joe had to listen to from the juvenile frequenters of the beach to take them out for a sail with him. But he always had plenty of company, and what with his sea stories and biscuits and ginger-beer Joe Barton was at last worshipped as a hero. Johnny ever went with him on these marine excursions, and despite his deformity and ever-attendant

crutch, without which he could not move, he had learned to handle and manœuvre *The Saucy Jack* with the greatest ease, and was as expert at taking in a reef or "putting about" as the oldest salt in Harmouth.

It was a glorious summer's day, the sea so smooth that it rippled on to the beach without noise, and seemed to be coyly kissing the pebbles. So hot, too, that the rowers in the many boats floating about were leaning listlessly on their oars, allowing themselves to drift lazily along with the tide. All Harmouth seemed to be on the water, everything in the shape of a boat was engaged. *The Saucy Jack* alone remained idle. There she lay, about a hundred yards from the shore, securely anchored, and everything as neatly fastened up as when she had been left the night before. Many and anxious were the inquiries for Joe Barton, and general were the expressions of regret that he should not be in the way on such a lovely day. No one knew where he had gone, not even Johnny. All he could say was that his father had received a letter the night before, after reading which he had sat silent and gloomy all the rest of the evening, and gone out before six o'clock in the morning, when he was a-bed, without saying a word. So *The Saucy Jack* remained idle all through that livelong summer's day.

Evening came on, and Johnny, who had been lounging about uneasily, for he could not bear his father to be away from him, began to feel very tired and sleepy, and thinking that a nap on board would be cool and comfortable, hailed one of the passing boats, and was duly transported to *The Saucy Jack*. Creeping into the little cabin at her bow, in which spare sails, empty ginger-beer bottles, and such like were kept, he soon fell into a sound and heavy slumber. How long it lasted he knew not, but when he woke he was startled by hearing a rippling sound above his head; it was quite dark, too, and the boat felt as if she were moving smartly along. What could have happened? Had she broke away from her anchor? For a moment he lay still, frightened in spite of himself. Then slowly he raised himself on his elbow, and rubbing his eyes, peered through the narrow aperture through which he had entered. He could see the main-sail bellied out with the fresh breeze, and that was all. But was it not enough? He knew he was out on the sea, but how had he come there? Could anybody out of spite have sent him adrift? No; he knew of no one who had a grudge against him; suddenly he was startled by a groan as if of

pain. His heart thumped against his side, the perspiration broke out in great beads on his forehead, he neither moved hand nor foot. Then ensued an agonising silence, and then a voice, hoarse and broken with emotion, burst into a passionate prayer. Johnny was braver now, and dragging himself along on his hands and knees, as quickly as his infirmities would allow, he made for the entrance, and thrust his head out. There was no moon, but the stars shone out bravely, and in their light he could see the figure of a man with his back towards him, rocking backwards and forwards, his face buried in his hands, and murmuring to himself. Who could it be? Johnny essayed to speak, but his lips were parched, soundless, and glued together, his tongue rough and dry. He stared at the black shadow, as if it were a spirit. Between it and him there was a seat running across the boat, he tried to reach it, in order to pull himself along, but could not. The figure moved its head, and in a momentary flash of summer lightning Johnny saw that it was his father. He sought to speak again, but he could not, while his eyes eagerly devoured his every movement. He saw him move his hand down to the seat beside him, he saw him raise his arm with something that glittered in the silver light, he heard a click, and then, as if by inspiration, the truth burst upon him. Hurling himself forward with the energy of despair, he caught his father by the arm. There was a flash, a report, and then he felt something graze his fingers. But he heeded it not; seizing the pistol from his hand, he threw it with all his strength into the sea, and then sank fainting into the bottom of the boat.

Black grew the clouds, higher rose the wind, beating up the waves into angry contention. There was every appearance of the advent of a severe storm. *The Saucy Jack*, left to herself, was heeling over in the trough of the sea in a perilous manner, but still Joe Barton, for it was he, sat with his face in his hands; still Johnny lay silent and motionless in the bottom of the boat. Presently a great, green wave came curling along, and dashing against the boat's side, wetted both to the skin. It roused Joe from his stupor, it roused Johnny from his insensibility; in another moment they were in one another's arms. Still the wind freshened, still the waves rose higher and higher, those two clasped in that firm embrace heeded them not, for the mercy of God was in their hearts, and storm and tempest had no fear for them.

It blew a gale that night and morning, and a large vessel went



ashore on Harmouth sands, but no lives were lost. The wives of the fishermen lay sleepless and uneasy in their beds, for their good men were out on the angry sea earning bread for them and the children. The hoarse voice of the wind and the angry roar of the waves sent a thrill to their hearts as they heard them, and many a prayer stole up through the black sky and gained the ear of the Unseen. When the morning sun broke bravely through the drifting clouds, there was a heartfelt shout of thanksgiving to see the toilers of the night come safely into harbour. Huge were the breakfasts eaten, sound was the sleep that followed, for it had been a hard battle between man and the elements.

Later in the day a knot of men were lounging on the shore. "Where's *The Saucy Jack*?" asked one. "Ain't Joe Barton turned up yet?" said another. While old Murtoch, the patriarch of the group, mumbled out "She ain't drawed up, she ain't at anchor; I'm blessed if I don't think she's gone down head first." This inaugurated a conversation about Joe, and various and singular were the reasons given for his continued absence. While they were engaged in this discussion, a man, bareheaded and breathless, rushed frantically down over the pebbles, his face pale as death, his eyes almost starting out of his head. When he reached the group, he stopped and remained speechless. "Hullo, Silas, what's wrong, lad?" inquired one. "You look dazed, man," said another.

"The Bank," he whispered hoarsely.

"Well, what of the Bank?" asked old Murtoch, impatiently.

"It's broke," he gasped, and then, without vouchsafing any further information, rushed away as quickly as he had come. The news he brought fell like a thunderbolt in the midst of those to whom he told it; they seemed stunned for a moment, and then hastened up to the town to find if he had spoken the truth.

Alas! it was but too true, the County Bank, being unable to meet a run upon its resources on the previous day at the chief market town, where its head office was, had been compelled to stop payment, and close all its branch establishments. Considerable assets, however, were expected, the number of shareholders being amply sufficient to cover all liabilities. It was some time before the Harmouth fishermen could be made to understand that, if they were only patient, they would have nearly all their money back. They stood in a body outside the Bank

door till the darkness took them home worn out and sad at heart to bed. There went out no boats that night from Harmouth to fish!

The morning following the day on which the Harmouth Bank had stopped, a boat was seen some distance out making its way for the shore as well as it could with a broken mast and a ragged sail. All eyes were strained towards it. Whose could it be? Where was it coming from? Old Murtoch, shading his eyes with his hand, gazed silently out over the watery space. Then in a moment he dropped his arm exclaiming, "Well, bless my heart, if it aint '*The Saucy Jack*,' with Joe and the kid aboard." Immense was the astonishment; some said "it couldn't be," but by-and-by, sure enough, she glided in past the pier-head, Joe at the tiller, and Johnny making himself useful in hauling in the sails. They both looked pale and weary, but the shout of welcome with which they were received lit up both their faces pleasantly. When "*The Saucy Jack*" had been made fast, Joe and his boy came ashore. All were eager to tell him the news, but none liked to, for it was well known that he was a large shareholder in the bank. But he seemed to understand their whispering, and taking Johnny's hand, he merely said quietly, "I know all about it. It's been and ruined me, but that's neither here nor there," and then moved off towards home. But ere he had gone many steps he took Johnny up in his arms, crutch and all, and carried him home and up to his bed in his own tiny room. He would not undress him, for already was the poor little man in a heavy slumber, but laying him down tenderly on the outside of the counterpane, that great, strong man fell on his knees, and with his face resting on the hands of his sleeping child, thus remained for a long, long time. What he thought, what he prayed, what thanksgivings burst from his very soul only the Book wherein his life is written can reveal. It was one of those times in the existence of a man when the days that are gone are lived over again, and the lessons they have taught are appreciated. Then the clouds roll back, the dawn breaks with promise of fine weather, and he nerves himself anew to face the future, bring it sunshine or storm. Thus taking courage, Joe Barton raised himself from his knees, no longer the craven and coward, afraid to meet the ills of life, but ready to grin and bear them. He was an altered man. And who had been the mysterious agent in the hand of Providence that had wrought his reformation? His poor, little deformed child, who through the night of storm and danger had been near him with lion

heart and dauntless courage, who had taught him that mercy is extended even unto him who would take his own life.

A few words more. Years passed on; the expected call had been made by the bank, and Joe's goods and chattels were all sold, but he neither groaned nor grumbled; he set himself manfully to work once again, and though his hair grew grey, and he was not quite so hearty and strong as of yore, yet all were willing to lend him a hand, and he soon began to find his circumstances improving. But for one circumstance he would have been happy. Johnny had never been thoroughly well since that dreadful night of storm and disaster; his back had grown rounder, and he complained of a pain in his leg frequently. Joe grew very anxious; every spare moment was dedicated to his child. One day he took him to London to see a great doctor, and when he came back he looked ten years older, for there was a gloomy prophecy gnawing at his heart. From that day Johnny took to his bed. He was a good, patient little fellow, but he would have no nurse but his dear old daddy; and his thin, pale face, used to light up the moment Joe entered the room; and when his father sat down by him, he would put his hand into his horny palms, and smile as if supremely happy. One morning Joe came in to breakfast, and as usual bounded upstairs to see his boy. Johnny was lying on his back, his eyes turned expectantly towards the door. The window was wide open, and a delicious soft breeze from the sea came playing through it. The sick child was going to his rest, there could be little doubt about that; his eyes were unnaturally bright, his cheek strangely flushed; in a few moments the ebb of the tide must set in. Joe sat down beside him, and then, as he was wont, Johnny put his hand in his, and then slowly and quietly spoke thus:

"Dear daddy, I'm going home. The doctor was right when he told you I weren't good for long. I feel as if I hadn't got no blood in my body, and my legs feel so strange. Hold me up in your arms, daddy, I want to whisper to you."

Joe felt inclined to resist for a moment, for he would have gone for the doctor, but the child's manner chained him to his seat. Putting his arm round him, he brought his head close to his shoulder. Johnny nestled himself close, pressed his lips against the big bushy whiskers, and then continued:

"Daddy, don't lose heart again. Promise me that, won't you?"



DADDY, DON'T LOSE HEART AGAIN.

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Remember, daddy darling, the secret. I—I've kept it, you keep it too, won't you?"

Pressing his hands to his father's face, he looked eagerly into his eyes, passed his fingers over his cheek, and murmuring, "The secret, remember," in a moment was dead.

They laid him in the corner of the churchyard, under the yew tree, by his mother, and on Sunday mornings, after service, Joe has now to stand alone and gaze on the spot where rest the two beings he loved so well. But his secret is buried there too. What secret? That having received a letter to acquaint him of impending ruin, and found its information correct, he had sought to escape meeting his disaster by himself destroying the life that a merciful Creator had given him. How he was saved from this crime has been told, and the secret that was is a secret no longer.

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## THE PRINCE OF SLEONA.

### Book II.

#### HOW LOROIO CAME TO THE LAND OF MAGIC, AND WHAT BEFEL HIM THERE.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### ELMONA.

WITH respect to the voyage from Sleona to Tama, which occupied about six weeks, little need be said. Loroio was the only person on board, besides the ship's company. The time hung wearily on his hands, and he was eager to arrive at his destination and to begin his new life. Unfortunately, he was no better in health. He had hoped that the sea voyage might do him good, but this did not prove to be the case. He used to play on his lute a little every day, partly to pass the time and partly because he thought it would be well to practice music regularly, as he had resolved to make that his profession; but this afforded him little satisfaction, and he would soon

lay the instrument aside and pace the deck listlessly, or stand looking over the ship's side, watching the beautiful albatrosses which kept circling about, with their grand, powerful pinions stretched out, always keeping near the vessel, and never, apparently, taking any repose. Whoever has passed through the Southern Seas, where these birds live, must have loved to watch the noble creatures, and marvelled at their power and endurance. They will follow a vessel for days and weeks, hundreds of miles from any land, and you will scarcely see them settle for a few minutes at a time on the sea, and then it is only to examine or pick up some floating object; immediately after, with a flap or two of their great wings, they are up with the ship again. At whatever hour of the day or night you come on deck it is all the same; in the bright noon or in the faint moonlight,

“With folded feet, in stoles of white,  
On sleeping wings they sail.”

So the time dragged on, until at length one morning at daybreak the Prince, who had slept on deck (as it was delightful to be there under the stars rather than hot and close below), saw a curtain of morning vapour rise slowly, like the drop-scene of a theatre, disclosing the city of Tama (the capital of the country), with its azure-roofed temples and its strangely picturesque architecture, stretching up the slopes of the five hills on which it was built, the most wonderful panorama his eyes had ever looked upon. In a couple of hours more the anchor dropped in the bay, which was crowded with native craft as well as a considerable number of vessels of other countries.

The people of Tama were proud of their ancient civilization, which had been handed down to them from times of fabulous antiquity. Like the Chinese and Japanese of the present day, they were of opinion that all other nations were more or less barbarians, and that they alone were the depositaries of all learning, art, and information; moreover that their ways of doing all things were the only proper ways. They were wrong in so thinking with respect to many subjects, in which other nations, which dated but as from yesterday compared with them, and of whose very names many of them knew nothing, had far surpassed them. In some things, however, they did continue to excel other nations, as they once had certainly excelled in all; one of their specialities being music, and another the study and knowledge of the

more hidden powers of nature, a pursuit to which the name of "magic" has generally been given, perhaps for want of a better. It formed part of their religion (which was in some respects not unlike Llamaism, at the present day the religion of Thibet, &c.), and their priests, who were a distinct class, succeeding in a hereditary manner to the offices of priesthood, were the chief practitioners of it. No doubt the influence of this faith had in the main retarded their progress as a nation, and kept them shut up, in their arrogance, from influences from without. Their musical superiority was such that it was renowned throughout the world. Nearly every one in the land could perform well on some instrument. Most of their instruments are now unknown, for this people and their cities have for ages disappeared from the face of the earth, though traces of the latter have from time to time been stumbled upon by travellers, exciting wonder by their strangeness and great antiquity. It is presumed, however, that even the high musical cultivation and progress of the present age have by no means placed us on their level. But this is only vague speculation.

Prince Loroio, in his boyhood, had studied music under a native of Tama who passed some time in Sleona, and he had made great progress under him. So when the prince came to hear music in Tama he was very fairly pleased with his own proficiency, although he was obliged to admit to himself that he was by no means so wonderful a performer as he had thought. He had fancied that the highest musical appointments might have been within his reach; but he found that he could take his place as nothing more than a clever amateur, and that there were hundreds of better performers than himself who were labouring, so to speak, in the mere rank and file of the musical army. This disappointed him very much, and so far discouraged him that he gave up his music altogether for a time, and did next to nothing. However, the money he had brought began to run low, so he took to playing and singing in an evening, like many others, in the favourite public promenade, which was, in fact, the great cemetery outside the town. For there, as in many Eastern countries at the present day, the cemeteries were used as places of recreation; and under the splendid trees, many of them of great age, and among the highly ornamented tombs, surrounded by flowers, the people promenaded and sat in the evenings listening to the minstrels, looking at jugglers and

exhibitors of various kinds, smoking and partaking of refreshments. These cemeteries were in fact the public gardens. So Loroio took his place among those who sang and played—a sad humiliation for a prince, you will naturally think, but Loroio had been obliged to lay aside his rank, and there was nothing derogatory in the occupation, according to the views of that place, since many persons of high condition were accustomed to adopt this mode of replenishing their purses.

Loroio's voice was so lovely, and he sang with such a rare charm of expression that he always had many listeners; and the ladies in particular were attracted by his interesting and melancholy grace, and by his distinguished appearance, no less than by the rare beauty of his voice. And many of the court ladies, after listening to him, would give him some trinket or ornament which they had been wearing; of small value, perhaps, but made all the more precious by the kind manner or the winning smile which accompanied the gift. And one evening a most beautiful lady, very richly and tastefully dressed, who came up merrily laughing and talking with a magnificent young officer of the Imperial Body Guard, having stopped to listen, was so touched by a sad little song which Loroio executed with a perfect and moving simplicity and finish of expression, that she could not help weeping a little. After this she would come and listen to him every night; and very soon she begged him to favour her by attending a grand supper which she was about to give to some of the nobility. And on this occasion she availed herself of the opportunity of asking him to take up his residence in her mansion, and be, in fact, her own minstrel. This proposal he was very glad to accept, for he was dissatisfied with the life he was leading, and disliked singing publicly in the cemetery to all who might happen to be passing by.

The Lady Elmona, in whose mansion Loroio found himself thus installed, was the young widow of one of the principal judges of the kingdom, who died soon after he had married her. Though neither the lady nor her husband were exactly of noble birth, yet his position had placed him on an equality with the first families, and his fortune, which she inherited (as there were no children), was very large. Her mansion, in the grand quarter of the city close by the cemetery, was one of the finest in Tama, and everything about her establishment was rich and sumptuous. No one gave such suppers, no one had such horses, servants, wines, flowers. Many a young noble had tried in

vain to induce her to break through her widowhood, but nobody seemed as yet to have touched her heart, though the officer of the Imperial Body Guard, already referred to, was supposed to have made more progress in her favour than anybody else. She was very beautiful to look upon, and seemingly kind-hearted and good, but at the same time she was somewhat frivolous and wayward, for she was still quite young, and much spoiled by the flattery of every one.

Loroio was almost happier now than he had been since he could remember. The Lady Elmona would constantly have him with her wherever she went and whatever she did; and as she had herself a fine talent for music of the best sort, Loroio experienced the pleasure so dear to the artist nature of being thoroughly appreciated by one who could judge and whom he liked. When I say "liked," I feel that I am scarcely saying enough, for it was only to be expected that, in the circumstances, the liking which Loroio had felt from the first for this beautiful lady should soon develop into a warmer sentiment. So Loroio began to feel that he must confess to himself that every day he became more attached to the Lady Elmona; but he fought against this passion as one not to be indulged, for, even had he not been a prince and she a commoner and of a foreign country, she was, of course, of the Tama faith. And, moreover, notwithstanding the happier turn which his life had taken, his health got no better, and probably his love, which he felt must be resisted, and all the attendant anxieties, only made him worse. She for her part saw that he was suffering, and he would often detect his lady watching him with an expression of tender anxiety, which caused him an inexplicable feeling of gratitude and unhappiness combined.

Late one evening, after a long and beautiful day spent in an excursion on the water, Loroio was sitting in the gardens, pondering many things in his mind. The moon was rising, round and full, above the sea, and tracing a path of light over the gently rippling waves to the beach of white sand which formed the bottom of a small rocky cove which the gardens overhung. The nightingales had begun their songs among the blossoming trees, which gave out their sweetest perfume under the influence of the summer dew. Great bats were fluttering and darting noiselessly, with rapid and irregular flight, in the warm, still night air, and a large tame owl, a pet and favourite of Lady Elmona's, waking up from the doze in which it passed the hours of day

in a thick evergreen tree, made an occasional short excursion on its noiseless wings from one part of the garden to another preparatory to commencing its nocturnal business.

Loroio's thoughts were far away in his own country, in the old, old happy times, before everything had departed from him—health, peace, a kingdom, all but this engrossing love, against which he felt so powerless to strive, though strive with it he must. Looking inward from the sea, on which he had been mechanically gazing, he saw Elmona standing before him in the moonlight, her eyes fixed upon him bright and full. When she met his glance she smiled gaily and sweetly.

"The soul of my minstrel is sad," she said. "He is weary of this strange land. Just now his thoughts were back in his own country; he heard the voice of the fair-haired maiden he is always sorrowing for; he heard her singing in the vineyard on the sloping hill by the sea, singing that song which first I heard him sing the night I listened to him in the cemetery, when the foolish tears came to my eyes. I would I had never heard it. And yet, not so. But what matters it? I would have you cease dreaming of the past and grieving for what is not. The present only is ours. Cleave, then, to the present; seize upon it and employ it. I have somewhat to tell you; but, first of all, be gay. Smile—sing to me. Sing me something like this night—gentle, mystic, tender. In such a night as this I feel that even I could make some song such as the nightingales in the trees there might pause to hear, and strive to learn and copy."

"Dear lady," said Loroio, "indeed I would sing for you gladly, but just now I cannot. It is not in my heart. You know well that there are times when music itself seems out of tune, and a dead thing. It is so with me to-night. To-morrow this will have passed away. Then I will sing my best to you, and try to make amends."

"Oh! to-morrow!" said Elmona, in a tone of playful banter: "to-morrow is great! But to-morrow may never come. And if it does, will there be such an evening as this? and, above all, shall I be in this particular mood? But no matter, dear minstrel; do not think I am vexed. You are very good; you never weary of singing to me, and are always ready to gratify my caprices. I know, too, that there are times, as you say, when music seems out of tune, and when it becomes almost impossible. We will talk, then. You will tell me



about your own country, and about the fair-haired girl. Firstly, her eyes? I have never seen but one person with fair hair, and his eyes were red."

Loroio laughed at this description of some "Albino," in spite of his graver mood, at which Elmona clapped her hands and laughed too, saying: "There, now, I have made you gay."

"Dear lady," Loroio said, "if there were any such fair-haired girl, as you imagine, I would tell you of her gladly; but there is no such cause for my reveries. I was, indeed, thinking of my own country when you came, but that was all."

"All—really and truly all? Not one little thought of—on any other subject? My minstrel, you are simple in the ways of men. Which of the gallants of Tama, I wonder, would have lost such an opportunity to say he was thinking of nothing but of my peerless self. It is true, my hair is black," she continued, heaving a mournful sigh, and she took off, as she spoke, the circlet of plain gold which she wore on her head, releasing as she did so her magnificent hair, which fell in masses almost to her feet.

Loroio kept silence, for, indeed, had he told her all which had been in his thoughts she would have seen that he was not so unlike the rest of the world as her words implied. And he had a severe struggle within himself not to tell her there and then all his love for her; but he vanquished himself, and refrained from doing so.

"Now, you are sighing and sad again," said Elmona. "Will you not tell me what it is that makes you sorrowful," she continued, in a tone of great kindness and interest, placing her hand on his shoulder. "I have done all I could to make you happy; perhaps I can do much more. Confide in me. I am willing—perhaps only too willing—to aid you in any way. I would fain see you smiling and content. Now, you are always grieving and unhappy. Tell me your grief. It lightens all grief to share it with a true friend."

"Lady," said the Prince, "my grief, I fear, is beyond your power to assuage, but I owe to you the only solace I have experienced since misfortune overtook me; and, as it is your wish, I will tell you my story; you will then understand how it is that I cannot always be gay and light of heart, and you will better know how priceless to me has been your kindness—and—and—how—and what I have been unable to resist feeling with respect to yourself, although till now I have

fought and struggled with that till my life has become more a burden to me than ever."

And thereupon he told her, as briefly as he could, his history, as it has been already related.

Elmona listened, and as the story proceeded her eyes gleamed with an expression of triumphant joy. At length, when the prince had finished, after a pause of a few moments, she addressed him as follows :

"What you have told me has only confirmed what I had imagined. It was impossible to see you and to know you, as I have seen and known you, without speedily discovering that you were far other than your present lot would indicate. But enough of the past. Your sorrows and trials have been bitter, but they are over now. From this hour you may enter upon a life of happiness, such as your wildest dreams have never pictured. It is true I cannot give you back your island-kingdom ; but I can lay at your feet, firstly, that palace, with all that it contains,—and, with it, that which may seem a small thing to you in truth, though with the lapse of years you may come to prize it somewhat—the first, true, and perfect love of a heart, which has slept a careless sleep till now. But all this is little, for I will share with you a mighty power, which is mine by inheritance, and which I can bestow upon him whom I truly love, though upon none other. My mother, the last descendant of an ancient priestly house, allied for centuries with one of the most powerful tribes of the Spirits of Night, endowed me at her death with all her secret knowledge, and with the talismans which she inherited from her ancestors. But such is the power of those beings, and so rooted and obstinate is the persistence with which they seek to evade that control over them which is vested in me, that I shrink from dealing with them alone and unaided. Guided and aided by you, my prince, and supported by your strength, the gates of that kingdom over which they bear sway are open to us, and I see no limits to that which we may jointly accomplish. Oh ! happy hour that brought you to me ! Thrice happy the seeming sorrows which brighten into such a joy !"

Completely overwhelmed by this unexpected revelation, Loroio could find no words in which to answer. Elmona had sunk upon her knees, and resting her head against an ancient tree, while her arms were raised towards the sky, was rapidly reciting in a low tone what seemed to be magical verses, in a language unknown to Loroio. The pet owl

had taken up his position on a branch of the tree over her head, and, while his eyes gleamed brilliantly in the moon, he hooted from time to time as she paused for a moment in her recital. By the time she had made an end, Loroio had restored his thoughts to some degree of calmness and order, and proceeded to question her eagerly as to the secrets of which she had spoken. She replied at once that she could not enter any further into their nature, nor, indeed, give him any further information connected with them, until he had gone through one preliminary ceremony, which would, however, take but a very short time, and be very easily accomplished.

This, it appeared, was that he must, with certain formalities, and in a certain prescribed manner, deny and renounce his own religion, trample upon his sacred books, and solemnly swear allegiance and fealty to the Ruler of the Spirits of Night. This done, she would immediately initiate him into her own secrets, and confide to his care and keeping certain of her most important talismans; and their work could be at once commenced, and carried out to any given extent.

Loroio was smitten with such inexpressible horror at this proposal that it was some minutes before he could find words in which to utter his indignant refusal, and, at once forgetting all his love for her, and unheeding her passionate pleading, he burst from her hold, (for she strove to detain him), and, hurrying to his own apartments he hastily took his lute, and arousing his hound, who was most unwilling to leave his comfortable lair, he passed from the house. In the garden, he could see Elmona prostrate under the trees, half-hidden in her black hair, and could hear her passionate and bitter sobbing and wailing, while the owl kept up a loud continuous hooting, and the bats fluttered and darted hither and thither in the wildest confusion. Striking his hand wildly on his forehead, he passed hurriedly out, like a man in a dream, and did not pause till he found himself in the middle of the cemetery.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE PRIEST OF LIGHT.

LOROIO threw himself down upon the horizontal portion of an ancient sculptured tomb, overshadowed by venerable cypresses. The moon lighted up the fanciful arabesques and ornaments cut upon the pillar,

where, surrounded by lilies and ivy-leaves, there glittered a mystic inscription, graven in the peculiar and sacred character of the language of the priests, and which read as follows :

“Aum. Mane. Padme. Aum.”

The literal translation of this sentence is—

“Oh ! the Jewel in the Lotos. Amen.”

And it is considered to have been a sacred invocation to the Deity.\* But it is believed to have had hidden meanings also, only fully known to the “Magi” or initiated priests, themselves. However that may be, it was very often met with throughout the realm, being commonly placed upon edifices of all sorts, over the doors of houses, on gateways, arches and tombs, and upon detached pillars, standing remote in the open country, as to which the generality of people could not tell why they were placed there, or what they were erected for. Besides which it was inscribed upon rings and brooches, as well as worn as a talisman by the lower orders, being written on a scrap of parchment by a priest, and enclosed in three small bags, one within another, and thus hung round the neck by a chain or string.

When Loroio, after resting for a time absorbed in his thoughts, which were in a whirl of agitation, had partially recovered his self-control, he looked about him mechanically as one does when half aroused from a dream or reverie, and his eyes rested upon this inscription. He found himself in that odd condition, which sometimes occurs to all of us, when we feel as if once on a time, when, or how long ago we know not, we had been in precisely the same circumstances before. Everything connected with the situation seems familiar and well remembered. If there are others in company with us, we think we know what they are going to do next, and what the next speaker is going to say ; and the thing so done or spoken appears to be exactly what we expected and anticipated. Many ingenious attempts have been made to account for this feeling, but I have no concern with explaining it at present. However, Loroio, being in this condition, was less astonished than he might otherwise have been, when he saw a

\* A recent traveller in Thibet mentions having seen this inscription in that country, and also describes certain costumes worn by some of the inhabitants, which partially resemble those worn by the Priest of Light. As his name did not accompany the letter in which he refers to them, I cannot quote it as an authority.

man, who advanced along a path, stop before him and salute him three times in the peculiar manner used in Sleona in saluting royal persons, touching the heart and brow in a certain way—a mode of salutation which was, as far as he knew and had ever seen, quite unknown in Tama. Having made the well-known gesture, the new-comer rendered his intention in doing so quite unmistakable by going on to say in courteous accents, “I salute you, Prince of Sleona.”

The stranger was clearly of the priestly class, having their distinctive mark of a flowing beard, and being dressed in a robe of a reddish violet, with white squares of about two inches in size at considerable intervals upon it, and wearing a head-dress, consisting of a broad leather band passing round the forehead, and hanging down the back and shoulders, studded with large pieces of amber. He was standing in the bright moonlight, and could be clearly seen; a man rather past the middle age, spare and active, with a powerful and intellectual head, and bright eyes, his beard pretty plentifully streaked with grey.

“You are astonished at being addressed by your name my son,” he continued; “I have known you, however, for months. I was prepared for your coming to this land, and have watched you since you came, anxiously enough. Lately you have been in much peril, for the evil Djên,\* the sons of Night, have striven against the Djên of Light, that they might prevail, and turn you from the paths that lead to Peace and Eternal Joy. You smile, for your faith is not as mine, and you either ignore the existence of those secondary powers, or you call them by other names, losing sight of the truth that they, like us, are but the creatures and servants of the Mighty Ruler of All. But let all this pass. I am not come to argue or to perorate on matters of belief. Whether you give credence to what I say, or let it pass by your ear like the breeze of night, the fact remains the same, that in the last three hours, you have reached one of the turning points of your earthly journey, and that you have passed it aright, and taken, so far, the true road. The Djên of Night have been driven back baffled; even

\* I need hardly say that the word “Djên” “power,” “strength,” “might,” “greatness,” and that not only in a supernatural sense. At the present day, it is used in China to express both supernatural and earthly greatness and power, and we have it also in the other languages, as associated with ideas of words “genius,” “giant,” &c., &c.

now, they circle around the barrier which your own act has drawn about you, circle around it in impotent anger—for they cannot cross it. The Djên of Light, rejoicing, have gained one great victory. For the first time in your life you have sacrificed your inclinations, you have sacrificed them to principle. You were sorely tempted; had you yielded, when your previous training and career is taken into consideration, little surprise could have been felt. The greater the cause for rejoicing that you have made this great stand, and gained this great victory. The consequences will, in all probability, be far beyond what you anticipate. But who can tell? The Evil Djên will assault you again and again. It is their nature, and the end of their being. And whether you will continue to triumph is one of the things hidden in the future, at least to me—at least to me.

“It surprises you, my son,” continued the Priest, who sat down beside the Prince on the tomb, and here placed his hand kindly on his shoulder, “to be addressed so by a stranger in a far country, and by the priest of a faith which you deny and condemn. Good. But know that the Sons of Light, whose priest and observer I have been from my youth have opened my bodily and spiritual eyes to much that is sealed in darkness to most of the sons of men—from no merit of mine, from no merit of mine.” Here the Priest paused and whispered some words of which Loroio did not even catch the sound, seeming to abase himself in utter humility. “It suffices to say, that through the light which has been cast by them upon my path on earth, your history is fully known to me as regards the past, and in some measure, your future has also been revealed to me, and I have it in my power to tell you this night, that which you will hear with great joy; for I have a message of happiness not to yourself only, but, through you to many, many besides.

“This country has been called the Land of Magic, and although that is not the name which truly belongs to the knowledge which is here cultivated and put in practice, it is the one most universally acknowledged and understood. Our Magic is of two kinds, one whose end and purpose is true good, and another having quite different objects. But, before we talk further, let me bring you to my temple. It is not far, you can rest there with me for the night, since you have left your last dwelling, and there I can talk with you better than in the open cemetery.” The Priest then rose and led the way to the Temple of



Light, of which he was one of the seven chief priests. This temple stood on the summit of the highest of the five eminences on which the city was built, forming the central point of it, for this highest eminence was surrounded by the other four, which were of lower elevation. The temple was of great size, being divided into seven divisions, radiating from a centre. Each division contained in itself a separate temple, having various smaller apartments attached to it, and each of them opened into the principal temple which was in the centre and in the form of a circle. It was surmounted by a roof shaped somewhat like an inverted convolvulus bell, of a rich deep blue colour and having on the apex a great gilt globe so bright that by day it shone in the sun's rays like a second sun. The Priest conducted Loroio through the open courts, which were flooded in the bright moonlight, to his own apartment adjoining one of the seven exterior temples, where they sat down in a small chamber, simply but comfortably furnished, through the open windows of which, facing the east, the moon shone brightly, and from whence could be seen (beyond a carefully tended garden, separated by walls on each side from those adjoining), a beautiful prospect of the sleeping city, with the shining sea beyond.

Being seated here the Priest continued his communication. "My son," he went on, "it has been given to me this night to meet you, and to tell you that a way now lies open before you to a precious gift and boon, no less than the perfect recovery of your bodily and mental health and vigour, the loss of which has for so long been a source of misery and uneasiness to you and those who love you. There is only one remedy, but that remedy, though difficult of attainment, now lies within your power. Had the issue of this night's conflict been other than it has, the remedy would have been for ever beyond your reach, and, as ordinary means are of no avail to cure you (for I tell you that your malady lies beyond all physicians' skill), you would but have gone on from bad to worse, and ere long your days on earth would have ended.

"I do not say this to alarm you, since I tell you that the remedy exists. But your own consciousness has told you, of late months, more and more clearly, that which you know confirms my words."

"It is so, in truth," said Loroio, "and day by day my existence grows more burdensome, and even the hope, the wish to prolong it, has been nearly dead within me. But your words give me new life

If there is a remedy, if there be any ordeal to be passed through, ah ! tell me what it is. Oh ! it would be bliss to know health again, freshness and strength, freedom of body and mind, even were life in all other respects but continual misery and struggle. For how long, how long, have I had to bear the weight of outward wretchedness, added to inward feebleness—oh ! how long !”

“You will be well and free again. Thus much I know. In other respects the future is dark ; but health will be yours, if you follow my counsel.

“As the first causes of your health’s decay were that want of purpose, that continual pleasing of yourself, that constant yielding to your own inclinations, and following your own fancies, in which your early years were spent, so it is only by adopting a course of conduct diametrically opposite that you can hope to undo what is past, and follow the path which leads to restoration. There are before you three great trials ; but when you have gone through them happily, and have successfully battled and overcome, you will enter upon a period of peace and joy. You will have to persevere, to labour, and to obey. Believe me, happiness, success and content, here upon earth, are not to be achieved otherwise.

“I will not weary you, however, by talking further abstractly on these subjects. Bear them always in mind during your future career, and now I will at once proceed to describe to you how you must set about your cure.

“In the domains of the mighty Lord of the Black Castle there is a certain tree. It grows by the tomb of a mighty one, who has long since passed from earth ; one to whom it was given to know more of the hidden than to any other of the sons of men whose fame is recorded in history. For when, in the remote days when earth was young, the Sons of Light took wives from among mortals, the race to which he belonged had its origin, and of all that illustrious race he was the most distinguished. This tree grows from his tomb ; it lives, though of immemorial age, but its properties, and indeed its very life, lie dormant, except under certain peculiar circumstances. When tended and cultivated in a certain manner, and by certain exceptionally fated and circumstanced persons, it has the property of producing blossoms which are endowed with extraordinary powers. After the lapse of many long years, longer than I can now tell, we hail, in you, one of the des-

tined and exceptionally endowed cultivators of this tree. You are of noble birth, pure of heart, prone to the beautiful and good—you are afflicted with a grievous and incurable disease—above all, you have now won a great victory over yourself, have baffled the Djên of Night, who deemed you an easy prey, and have voluntarily set your face and directed your steps to the path of Right. For you, then, the tree will produce its blossoms, waking once more into life after its long slumber; those blossoms will bring to you your health again, and, to others, an infinity of blessing which I can but dimly see."

A gleam of joy lighted up the Prince's worn and melancholy countenance. "Oh! can it be," he said. "Where then is this miraculous tree. Oh! lead me, bring me to it; or tell me how it is to be found, and how to labour at it. Oh! with what joy will I undertake the heaviest and most continued labour, if but health be at the end. Health! To be well once more, to be strong, light-hearted, free. Oh! father, your words fill me with a joy I thought never more to know."

And the Prince listened eagerly, while the moon rose in the cloudless sky, to the Priest as he told him at some length all that was known to him regarding this tree, and the means to be adopted by him to find it and tend it.

What the Priest told was briefly to this effect. Access to the tree could be obtained only through the aid, and by the permission and directions of the Lord of the Black Castle. It grew in his immense territory, which stretched far away into the land of Magic, and he alone knew its precise situation. No one had any personal knowledge respecting this territory. Very few had ever been at the Black Castle itself. This castle could be seen from a great distance, but when people set out to go to it, they very rarely succeeded in reaching it. A variety of accidents would prevent them; strange events would happen to them on their way; insurmountable obstacles would lead them to change their route; or they would find that something occurred to divert them from their object. Yet some few had reached it without any difficulty. All this had of course confirmed the reputation of the Lord of the Black Castle as a most powerful and learned enchanter. And so, in fact, he was; although his power and knowledge were never used for any but good and wise purposes; in which circumstance consisted the difference between him and so many other magical adepts of old times.

The Prince was, therefore, to set out without delay, and endeavour to reach the Black Castle, which, once accomplished, he was to beg of its master his leave to cultivate the tree, as well as his counsels as to the proper mode of doing so, and his directions also where to find it, and how to recognise it when found. It was known that the Lord of the Black Castle desired to have fruit of the tree, which he was in want of for purposes of his own, and it was therefore to be presumed that he would receive the Prince cordially, and give him all the assistance in his power. For which reason also, it was to be expected that the difficulties ordinarily experienced in reaching the castle might not be met with in this case. "Touching these difficulties," said the Priest in conclusion, "I have but one rule to give you. It is, however, a rule without exceptions, and upon your faithful observance of it, success will depend. Whatever difficulties or hindrances you may meet with, always face them boldly, and march straight upon them by the most direct way."

Having told the Prince this, the Priest rose up, and seeing a ray of light from the moon (now near the zenith) strike suddenly through a small opening overhead, he put on his robes of office, and said: "I must leave you now to repose. The moon is close to the highest point of the firmament, and this being the night of full moon, I must go to take my part in the solemn service which, at such times, we hold in honour of the secondary source of material light. To-morrow, I will travel with you so far on your way, and leave you when we can see the Black Castle in the distance." And making a peculiar mystic sign over the Prince's head, the Priest stepped forth into the temple.

As he went, a burst of music, from a throng of voices and instruments, arose and swelled as the priests came in procession down the several temples towards the centre, singing in solemn and harmonious strains. The Prince listened with great delight to this wonderful music,—having never heard anything resembling it before,—until it gradually died away and ceased; and when profound stillness at length fell upon the whole city, broken only by the occasional note of a night cricket in the gardens, he sunk into a deep sleep.

A. E.

[*To be continued.*]

## MRS. OVERTHEWAY'S REMEMBRANCES.

MRS. MOSS—(*continued*).

"SMASH! The fire, which had been gradually becoming hollow, fell in at this moment, and I started to find myself chilly and cramped; and so lay down. Then my thoughts took another turn. I wondered if I should grow up beautiful, like Mrs. Moss. It was a serious question. I had often looked at myself in the glass, but I had a general idea that I looked much like other little girls of my age. I began gravely to examine myself in detail, commencing from the top of my head. My hair was light, and cropped on a level with the lobes of my ears; this, however, would amend itself with time; and I had long intended that my hair should be of raven blackness, and touch the ground at least; 'but that will not be till I am grown up,' thought I. Then my eyes: they were large, in fact, the undue proportions they assumed when I looked ill or tired formed a family joke. If size were all that one requires in eyes, mine would certainly pass muster. Moreover, they had long curly lashes. I fingered these slowly, and thought of Sandy's whiskers. At this point I nearly fell asleep, but roused myself to examine my nose. My grandmother had said that Mrs. Moss's nose was delicately curved. Now, it is certainly true that a curve may be either concave or convex; but I had heard of the bridge of a nose, and knew well enough which way the curve should go; and I had a shrewd suspicion that if so very short a nose as mine, with so much and so round a tip, could be said to be curved at all, the curve went the wrong way; at the same time, I could not feel sure. For I must tell you that to lie in a comfortable bed, at an hour long beyond the time when one ought naturally to be asleep, and to stroke one's nose, is a proceeding not favourable to forming a clear judgment on so important a point as one's personal appearance. The very shadows were still as well as silent, the fire had ceased to flicker, a delicious quietude pervaded the room, as I stroked my nose and dozed, and dozed and stroked my nose, and lost all sense of its shape, and fancied it a huge lump growing under my fingers.—The extreme unpleasant-

ness of this idea just prevented my falling asleep ; and I roused myself and sat up again.

“ ‘It’s no use feeling,’ I thought, ‘I’ll look in the glass.’ ”

“There was one mirror in the room. It hung above the mantelpiece. It was old, deeply framed in dark wood, and was so hung as to slope forwards into the room.

“In front of the fire stood an old-fashioned, cushioned armchair, with a very high back, and a many-frilled chintz cover. A buffet lay near it. It was here that my grandmother had been sitting. I jumped out of bed, put the buffet into the chair that I might get to a level with the glass, and climbed on to it. Thanks to the slope of the mirror, I could now see my reflection as well as the dim firelight would permit.

“ ‘What a silly child!’ you will say, Ida. Very silly, indeed, my dear. And how one remembers one’s follies! At the end of half a century, I recall my reflection in that old nursery mirror more clearly than I remember how I looked in the glass before which I put on my bonnet this evening to come to tea with you. The weird, startled glance of my eyes, which, in their most prominent stage of weariness, gazed at me out of the shadows of the looking glass, the tumbled tufts of hair, the ghostly effect of my white night-dress. As to my nose, I could absolutely see nothing of its shape ; the firelight just caught the round tip, which shone like a little white toadstool from the gloom, and this was all.

“ ‘One can’t see the shape, full face,’ I thought, ‘If I had only another looking glass.’ ”

“But there was not another. I knew it, and yet involuntarily looked round the room. Suddenly I exclaimed aloud, ‘Mr. Joseph will do!’ ”

“Who was Mr. Joseph—you will ask. My dear Ida, I really do not know. I have not the least idea. I had heard him called Mr. Joseph, and I fancy he was a connection of the family. All I knew of him was his portrait, a *silhouette*, elegantly glazed, and framed in black wood, which hung against the nursery wall. I was ignorant of his surname and history. I had never examined his features. But I knew that happily he had been very stout, since his ample coat and waistcoat, cut out in black paper, converted the glass which covered them into an excellent mirror for my dolls.





MARY TRYING TO LOOK AT HER PROFILE.

“Worthy Mr. Joseph! Here he was coming in useful again. How much we owe to our forefathers! I soon unhooked him, and climbing back into the chair, commenced an examination of my profile by the process of double reflection. But all in vain! Whether owing to the dusty state of the mirror, or to the dim light, or to the unobliging shapeliness of Mr. Joseph’s person, I cannot say, but turn and twist as I would, I could not get a view of my profile sufficiently clear and complete to form a correct judgment upon. I held Mr. Joseph, now high, now low, I stooped, I stood on tip toe, I moved forward, I leant backward. It was this latest manœuvre that aggravated the natural top heaviness of the chair, and endangered its balance. The fore-legs rose, my spasmodic struggle was made in the wrong direction, and I, the armchair, and Mr. Joseph fell backwards together.

“Two of us were light enough, and happily escaped unhurt. It was the armchair which fell with such an appalling crash, and whether it were any the worse or no, I could not tell as it lay. As soon as I had a little recovered the shock, therefore, I struggled to raise it, whilst Mr. Joseph lay helplessly upon the ground, with his waistcoat turned up to the ceiling.

“It was thus that my aunt found us.

“If only Mr. Joseph and I had fallen together, no one need have been the wiser; but that lumbering armchair had come down with a bump that startled the sober trio at supper in the dining-room below.

“‘What is the matter?’ said Aunt Harriet.

“I was speechless.

“‘What have you been doing?’

“I couldn’t speak; but accumulating misfortune was gradually overpowering me, and I began to cry.

“‘Get into bed,’ said Aunt Harriet.

“I willingly obeyed, and Aunt Harriet seated herself at the foot.

“‘Now, think before you speak, Mary,’ she said quietly, ‘and then tell me the truth. What have you been doing?’

“One large tear rolled over my nose and off the tip as I feebly began—

“‘I got into the chair—’

“‘Well?’ said Aunt Harriet.

“‘—to look in the glass.’

“‘What for?’ said Aunt Harriet.

"Tears flowed unrestrainedly over my face as I howled in self-abasement—

"‘To look at the shape of my nose.’

"At this point Aunt Harriet rose, and turning her back rather abruptly, crossed the room, and picked up Mr. Joseph. (I have since had reason to believe that she was with difficulty concealing a fit of laughter.)

"‘What have you had this picture down for?’ she inquired, still with her back to me.

"‘I couldn’t see,’ I sobbed, ‘and I got Mr. Joseph to help me.’

"My aunt made no reply, and still carefully concealing her face, restored Mr. Joseph to his brass nail with great deliberation.

"There is nothing like full confession. I broke the silence.

"‘Aunt Harriet, I was awake when you and Granny were here, and heard what you said.’

"‘You are a very silly, naughty child,’ my aunt severely returned. ‘Why don’t you go to sleep when you are sent to bed?’

"‘I can’t,’ I sobbed, ‘with talking and candles.’

"‘You’ve got the screen,’ said Aunt Harriet, and I cannot tell why, but somehow I lacked courage to say that the red screen was the chief instrument of torture.

"‘Well, go to sleep now,’ she concluded, ‘and be thankful you’re not hurt. You might have killed yourself.’

"Encouraged by the gracious manner in which she tucked me up, I took a short cut to the information which I had failed to attain through Mr. Joseph.

"‘Aunt Harriet,’ I said, ‘do you think I shall ever be as beautiful as Mrs. Moss?’

"‘I’m ashamed of you,’ said Aunt Harriet.

"I climbed no more into the treacherous armchair. I eschewed the mirror. I left Mr. Joseph in peace upon the wall. I took no further trouble about the future prospects of my nose. But night and day I thought of Mrs. Moss. I found the old cushion, and sat by it, gazing at the faded tints of the rosebuds, till I imagined the stiff brocade in all its beauty and freshness. I took a vigorous drawing fit; but it was only to fill my little book with innumerable sketches of Mrs. Moss. My uncle lent me his paint-box, as he was wont; and if the fancy portraits that I made were not satisfactory even to myself, they failed

in spite of cheeks blushing with vermillion, in spite of eyes as large and brilliant as lamp-black could make them, and in spite of the most accurately curved noses that my pencil could produce. The amount of gamboge and Prussian blue that I wasted in vain efforts to produce a satisfactory pea-green leaves me at this day an astonished admirer of my uncle's patience. At this time I wished to walk along no other road than that which led to my dear manor, where the iron gates were being painted, the garden made tidy, and the shutters opened; but above all the chief object of my desires was to accompany my grandmother and aunt in their first visit to Mrs. Moss.

"Once I petitioned Aunt Harriet on this subject. Her answer was—

"‘My dear, there would be nothing to amuse you; Mrs. Moss is an old woman.’

"‘Granny said she was so beautiful,’ I suggested.

"‘So she was, my dear, when your grandmother was young.’

"These and similar remarks I heard and heeded not. They did not add one wrinkle to my ideal of Mrs. Moss: they in no way whatever lessened my desire of seeing her. I had never seen my grandmother young, and her having ever been so seemed to me at the most a matter of tradition; on the other hand, Mrs. Moss had been presented to my imagination in the bloom of youth and beauty, and, say what they would, in the bloom of youth and beauty I expected to see her still.

"One afternoon, about a week after the arrival of Mrs. Moss, I was busy in the garden, where I had been working for an hour or more, when I heard carriage wheels drive up and stop at our door. Could it be Mrs. Moss? I stole gently round to a position where I could see without being seen, and discovered that the carriage was not that of any caller, but my uncle's. Then Granny and Aunt Harriet were going out. I rushed up to the coachman, and asked where they were going. He seemed in no way overpowered by having to reply—‘To the Manor, Miss.’

"That was to Mrs. Moss, and I was to be left behind! I stood speechless in bitter disappointment, as my grandmother rustled out in her best silk dress, followed by Aunt Harriet and my uncle, who, when he saw me, exclaimed—

"‘Why, there's my little Mary! Why don't you take her? I'll be bound she wants to go.’

“‘I do, indeed!’ I exclaimed, in Cinderella-like tones.

“‘But Mrs. Moss is such an old lady,” said Aunt Harriet, whose ideas upon children were purely theoretical, and who could imagine no interests for them apart from other children—from toys or definite amusements—‘What could the child do with herself?’

“‘Do!’ said my uncle, who took a rough and cheery view of life, ‘why, look about her, to be sure. And if Mrs. M. is an old lady, there’ll be all the more Indian cabinets and screens, and japanned tables, and knickknacks, and lapdogs. Keep your eyes open, Miss Mary; I’ve never seen the good lady or her belongings, but I’ll stake my best hat on the japan ware and the lapdog. Now, how soon can you be dressed?’

“‘Later in life the selfish element mixes more largely with our admirations. A few years thence, and in a first interview with the object of so many fancies, I should have thought as much of my own appearance on the occasion, as of what I was myself to see. I should have taken some pains with my toilette. At that time, the desire to see Mrs. Moss was too absorbing to admit of any purely personal considerations. I dashed into the nursery, scrubbed my hands and face to a raw red complexion, brushed my hair in three strokes, and secured my things with one sweep. I hastily pocketed a pincushion of red cloth, worked with yellow silk spots, in the likeness of a strawberry. It was a pet treasure of mine, and I intended it as an offering to Mrs. Moss. I tied my hood at the top of the stairs, fastened my tippet in the hall, and reached the family coach by about three of those bounds common to all young animals.

“‘Hulloh!’ said my uncle, with his face through the carriage door. ‘You’ve not thanked me yet.’

“‘I flung my arms round his starched neckcloth.

“‘‘You’re a darling,’ I exclaimed, with an emphatic squeeze.

“‘‘You’re another,’ he replied, returning the embrace upon my hood.

With this mutual understanding we parted, and I thought that if Mrs. Moss were not certain to fulfil my ideal, I should have wished her to be as nearly like uncle James as the circumstances of the case would permit. I watched his yellow waistcoat and waving hands till they could be seen no longer, and then I settled myself primly upon the back seat, and ventured upon a shy conciliating promise to be ‘very good.’

"You're quite welcome to come, child," said Aunt Harriet; 'but as I said, there are neither children nor playthings for you.'

"Children or playthings! What did I want with either? I put my arm through the loop by the window and watched the fields as they came and vanished with vacant eyes, and thought of Mrs. Moss. A dozen times had I gone through the whole scene in my mind before we drove through the iron gates. I fancied myself in the bare, spacious hall, at which I had peeped; I seemed to hear a light laugh, and to see the beautiful face of Mrs. Moss look over the bannisters; to hear a rustle, and the scraping of the stiff brocade, as the pink rosebuds shimmered, and the green satin shoes peeped out, and tap, tap, tap, the high pink heels resounded from the shallow stairs.

I had dreamed this day-dream many times over before the carriage stopped with a shake, and Aunt Harriet roused me, asking if I were asleep. In another minute or so we were in the hall, and here I met with my first disappointment.

To begin with, I had seen the hall unfurnished, and had not imagined it otherwise. I had pictured Mrs. Moss in her beauty and rose brocade, the sole ornament of its cold emptiness. Then (though I knew that my grandmother and aunt must both be present) I had really fancied myself the chief character in this interview with Mrs. Moss. I had thought of myself as rushing up the stairs to meet her, and laying the pincushion at her green satin feet. And now that at last I was really in the hall, I should not have known it again. It was carpeted from end to end. Fragrant orange trees stood in tubs, large hunting pictures hung upon the walls, below which stood cases of stuffed birds, and over all presided a footman in livery, who himself looked like a stuffed specimen of the human race with unusually bright plumage.

"No face peeped over the bannisters, and when we went upstairs, the footman went first (as seemed due to him), then my grandmother, followed by my aunt, and lastly I, in the humblest insignificance behind them. My feet sank into the soft stair-carpets, I vacantly admired the elegant luxury around me, with an odd sensation of heart-ache. Everything was beautiful, but I had wanted nothing to be beautiful but Mrs. Moss.

"Already the vision began to fade. That full-fed footman troubled my fancies. His scarlet plush killed even the thought of rosebuds, and the streaky powder upon his hair seemed a mockery of the *toupée* I



hoped to see, whose whiteness should enhance the lustre of rare black eyes. He opened the drawing-room door and announced my grandmother and aunt. I followed, and (so far as one may be said to face anything when one stands behind the skirts of two intervening elders) I was face to face with Mrs. Moss.

That is, I was face to face with a tall dark old woman, with stooping shoulders, a hooked nose, black eyes that smouldered in their sunken sockets, and a distinct growth of beard upon her chin. Mr. Moss had been dead many years, and his widow had laid aside her weeds. She wore a dress of *feuille-morte* satin, and a black lace shawl. She had a rather elaborate cap with a tendency to get on one side, perhaps because it would not fit comfortably on the brown front with bunchy curls which was fastened into its place by a band of broad black velvet.

"And this was Mrs. Moss! This was the end of all my fancies! There was nothing astonishing in the disappointment; the only marvel was that I should have indulged in so foolish a fancy for so long. I had been told more than once that Mrs. Moss was nearly as old as my grandmother. As it was she looked older. Why—I could not tell then, though I know now.

"My grandmother, though never a beauty, had a sweet smile of her own, and a certain occasional kindling of the eyes, the outward signs of a character full of sentiment and intelligence; and these had outlasted youth. She had always been what is called 'pleasing,' and she was pleasing still. But in Mrs. Moss no strength, no sentiment, no intellect, filled the place of the beauty that was gone. Features that were powerful without character, and eyes this glowed without expression, formed a wreck with little to recall the loveliness that had bewildered Mr. Sandford—and me.

"There is not much more to tell, Ida. This was the disappointment. This is the cause of my dislike for a certain shade of *feuille-morte* satin. It disappointed me of that rose brocade which I was never to see. You shall hear how I got through the visit however. This meeting which (like so many meetings) had proved the very reverse of what was hoped.

"Through an angle of Aunt Harriet's pelisse, I watched the meeting between my grandmother and Mrs. Moss. They kissed and then drew back and looked at each other, still holding hands. I wondered if my

grandmother felt as I felt. I could not tell. With one of her smiles, she bent forward and kissing Mrs. Moss again, said,

“ ‘God bless you, Anastatia.’

“ ‘God bless you, Elizabeth.’

“It was the first time Mrs Moss had spoken, and her voice was rather gruff. Then both ladies sat down, and my grandmother drew out her pocket-handkerchief and wiped her eyes. Mrs. Moss began (as I thought) to look for hers, and not finding it, called

‘Metcalf!’

on which a faded little woman, with her forefinger in a faded-looking book, came out from behind some window curtains and rummaging Mrs. Moss’s chair with a practised hand, produced a large silver snuff-box, from which Mrs. Moss took a pinch, and then offered it to Granny, who shook her head. Mrs. Moss took another and a larger pinch. It was evident what made her voice so gruff.

“Aunt Harriet was introduced as ‘My daughter Harriet,’ and made a stiff curtsy as Mrs. Moss smiled, and nodded, and bade her ‘sit down, my dear.’ Throughout the whole interview she seemed to be looked upon by both ladies as a child, and played the part so well, sitting prim and silent on her chair, that I could hardly help humming as I looked at her :

‘Hold up your head,  
Turn out your toes,  
Speak when you’re spoken to,  
Mend your clothes.’

I was introduced too, as ‘a grandchild,’ made a curtsy the shadow of Aunt Harriet’s, received a nod, the shadow of that bestowed upon her, and got out of the way as soon as I could behind my aunt’s chair, where coming unexpectedly upon three fat pug dogs on a mat, I sat down among them and felt quite at home.

“The sight of the pugs brought Uncle James to my mind, and when I looked round the room, it seemed to me that he must be a conjuror at least, so true was everything he had said. A large India screen hid the door; japanned boxes stood on a little table to correspond in front of it, and there were two cabinets with shallow drawers with decorated handles, and a great deal of glass, through which odd teacups, green dragons, Indian gods, and Dresden shepherdesses were visible upon the shelves. The room was filled with knickknacks, and here were the

dogs, no less than three of them! They were very fat, and had little beauty except as to their round heads, and black wrinkled snouts, which I kissed over and over again.

“‘Do you mind Mrs. Moss’s being old, and dressing in that hideous brown dress?’ I asked in a whisper at the ear of one of these round heads. ‘Think of the rosebuds on the brocade, and the pea-green satin, and the high-heeled shoes. Ah!’ I added, ‘you are only a pug, and pugs don’t think.’ Nevertheless, I pulled out the pin-cushion, and shewed it to each dog in turn, and the sight of it so forcibly reminded me of my vain hopes, that I could not help crying. A hot tear fell upon the nose of the oldest and fattest pug, which so offended him that he moved away to another mat at some distance, and as both the others fell fast asleep, I took refuge in my own thoughts.

“The question arose why should not Mrs. Moss have the pincushion after all? I had expected her to be young and beautiful, and she had proved old and ugly, it is true; but there is no reason why old and ugly people should not have cushions to keep their pins in. It was a struggle to part with my dear strawberry pincushion under the circumstances, but I had fairly resolved to do so, when the rustle of leave-taking began, and I had to come out of my corner.

“‘Bid Mrs. Moss good-day, Mary,’ said my grandmother, and added, ‘the child has been wild to come and see you, Anastatia.’

“Mrs. Moss held out her hand good-naturedly. ‘So you wanted to see me, my dear?’ said she.

“I took my hand out of my pocket, where I had been holding the pincushion, and put both into Mrs. Moss’s palm.

“‘I brought this for you, ma’am,’ I said. ‘It is not a real strawberry; it is emery; I made it myself.’

“And the fact of having sacrificed anything for Mrs. Moss made me almost fond of her. Moreover, there was an expression in her eyes at that moment which gave them beauty. She looked at my grandmother and laid her hand on my head.

“‘I lost all mine, Elizabeth.’

“I thought she was speaking of her pincushions, and being in a generous mood, said hastily,

“‘When that is worn out, ma’am, I will make you another.’

“But she was speaking of her children. Poor Mrs. Moss! She took another huge pinch of snuff, and called, ‘Metcalf.’

"The faded little woman appeared once more.

"'I must give you a keepsake in return, my dear,' said Mrs. Moss. 'The china pug, Metcalfe!'

"Metcalfe (whose face always wore a smile that looked as if it were just about to disappear, and who, indeed, for that matter, always looked as if she were just about to disappear herself) opened one of the cabinets, and brought out a little toy pug in china, very delicately coloured, and looking just like one of my friends on the mat. I fell in love with it at once, and it was certainly a handsome exchange for the strawberry pincushion.

"'You will send the child to see me now and then, Elizabeth?' said Moss as we retired.

"In the end Mrs. Moss and I became great friends. I put aside my dream among the 'vain fancies' of life, and took very kindly to the manor in its new aspect. Even the stuffed footman became familiar, and learnt to welcome me with a smile. The real Mrs. Moss was a more agreeable person than I have, I fear, represented her. She had failed to grasp solid happiness in life, because she had chosen with the cowardice of an inferior mind, but she had borne disappointment with dignity, and submitted to heavy sorrows with patience; and a greater nature could not have done more. She was the soul of good nature, and the love of small chat, which, contrasted so oddly with her fierce appearance, was a fund of entertainment for me, as I fed my imagination and stored my memory with anecdotes of the good old times in the many quiet evenings we spent together. I learnt to love her the more heartily, I confess, when she bought a new gown and gave the *feuille-morte* satin to Mrs. Metcalfe.

"Mrs. Metcalfe was 'humble companion' to Mrs. Moss. She was in reality single, but she exacted the married title as a point of respect. At the beginning of our acquaintance I called her 'Miss Metcalfe,' and this occasioned the only check our friendship ever received. Now I would, with the greatest pleasure, have addressed her as 'My Lord Archbishop,' or in any other style to which she was not entitled, it being a matter of profound indifference to me. But the question was a serious one to her, and very serious she made it, till I almost despaired of our ever coming to an understanding on the subject. On every other point she was unassuming almost to nonentity. She was weak-minded to the verge of mental palsy. She was more benevolent

in deed, and more wandering in conversation, than any one I have met with since. That is, in ordinary life. In the greenhouse or garden (with which she and the head gardener alone had any real acquaintance) her accurate and profound knowledge would put to shame many professed garden botanists I have met with since. From her I learnt what little I know of the science of horticulture, and with her I spent many happy hours over the fine botanical works in the manor library, which she alone ever opened.

"And so I became reconciled to things as they were, though to this day I connect with that shade of *feuille-morte* satin a disappointment not to be forgotten.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It is a dull story, is it not, Ida?" said the little old lady, pausing here. She had not told it in precisely these words, but this was the sum and substance of it.

Ida nodded. Not that she had thought the story dull, so far as she had heard it, and whilst she was awake; but she had fallen asleep, and so she nodded.

Mrs. Overtheday looked back at the fire, to which, indeed, she had been talking for some time past.

"I was wrong," she thought. "It is a child's story, but the moral is more for me than for her. Perhaps it was too foolish, even to tell—the unreasoning, wilful folly of childhood; and yet, would that unreasoning, wilful folly have belonged to childhood alone? Alas! my grown-up friend, are there now no passionate, foolish longings, for which we blind ourselves to obvious truth, and of which the vanity does not lessen the disappointment? Do we not still toil after rosebuds, to find *feuilles-mortes*?"

No voice answered Mrs. Overtheday's fanciful questions. The hyacinth nodded fragrantly on its stalk, and Ida nodded in her chair. She was fast asleep—happily asleep—with a smile upon her face.

The shadows nodded gently on the walls, and like a shadow the little old lady stole quietly away.

J. H. G.

[To be continued.]

## THE BUTTERFLY AND THE FAIRIES.

**A** Butterfly was grieved one day  
 Because he could do nought but play!  
 He envied bees and birds and ants,  
 And senseless stones and common plants,  
 And leaves that feed the life of trees,  
 And tiny builders in the seas,  
 And breathings of the summer gale  
 That waft a seed or swell a sail,  
 And winter's fleece of folded snow  
 That wraps the roots before they grow,  
 And light that wakes the hope of earth,  
 And shade that shelters every birth,  
 And dew that fosters every bloom,  
 And heat, and silence, and perfume.  
 All things were sent to toil and strive  
 To keep this happy world alive—  
 All had a work to do, except  
 Himself—and here he paused and wept!

He fluttered on through tracts of air,  
 So sorrowful he knew not where,  
 Away from all that once he sought :  
 He cared not what the roses thought ;  
 A daring lily, full of dew,  
 Struck his swift bosom as he flew :  
 Great was the shock, but on he passed,  
 And on, and up, and far, and fast,  
 Till, scarcely fit to sit or stand,  
 He came at length to Fairyland.

A busy scene! Laborious fays!  
 He watches them in mute amaze.  
 The whirr goes on from morn to night—  
 Some twisting threads of bloom and light,  
 Some weaving each resplendent line  
 Into a fabric soft and fine;

Some cutting shapes with anxious care,  
 Some ever sorting pair by pair;  
 Some bringing tiny moulds and prints  
 To stamp the wares with rainbow tints;  
 Some piling up the finished bales,  
 Some packing them in dock-leaf mails,  
 Arranging, cording, ticketing,  
 "These for the realms of earth, next spring."  
 In short it was, as all might see,  
 A Fairy Manufactory.

Sadly he watched them while they wrought.  
 "Here too is toil!" 'twas thus he thought—  
 "In all the lustre of this clime;  
 Not even a sylph is wasting time;  
 All have their task, to toil and strive,  
 To keep this happy world alive.  
 All have their work—I wish I knew  
 What glorious business they do!  
 It must be something great and grand  
 To need the skill of Fairyland!  
 Queen Morning's robes of rich device—  
 She never wears the same dress twice!  
 I wonder if I've rightly guessed?  
 I'll ask when next they stop to rest."

While thus he stood to see and hear  
 A brisk light porter sauntered near,  
 And touched his foxglove with an air  
 That asked him what he wanted there.  
 Had he an order—it should be  
 Attended to immediately;  
 Or a complaint—he might depend  
 On their endeavour to amend.  
 Perhaps a little bill to pay?  
 Or had he only lost his way?  
 "No," quoth the wanderer, "none of these;  
 But will you tell me, if you please,  
 What all these busy workers do?"

"Why, here's a lark! I thought you knew!"  
 (He uttered with a knowing twang,  
 That pretty phrase of fairy slang,



Made when a lark, benighted, found  
Its wandering way to elfin ground,  
And the small folk supposed, with awe,  
It was a dragon that they saw.)  
“Look round you, stranger—use your eyes :  
We make the *Wings of Butterflies* !”

“Oh, waste of labour, to adorn  
A plaything, which the wise must scorn !  
Toil rather for the bee, whose fame  
I envy, though I must not claim ;  
And leave the useless butterfly  
Unmarked to live, unmourned to die.”

Shouts of fine laughter while he spoke  
Betrayed how fairies love a joke.  
(On earth the mothers mused that day  
What made their leaping babes so gay,  
For well the darlings understand  
When there is fun in Fairyland.)  
A hoary sylph his smiles suppressed  
And gravely answered for the rest.  
“Weep not,” he said, “nor look askance  
At thy most sweet inheritance.  
Thou hast thy purpose ; be content  
To teach the use of ornament.  
Honey which human hearts can drink  
Is better than the bee’s, I think ;  
And though not stored in comb or hive,  
It helps to keep the world alive.  
The child who marks thy fluttering way,  
And stops a moment in his play,  
And feels at that familiar sight  
Some little movement of delight,  
Learns what no years of toil can teach,  
Looks at the regions out of reach,  
Sees some dim shadow of the Power  
That veins a shell and paints a flower,  
And says to wisdom, work, and pelf,  
Beauty is precious for itself.”

M. B. S.

# The Promise.

Words by J. H. G.

Music by ALEXANDER EWING.

*f* *p*  
*Allegro non troppo.*

8. CHILD.  
 Five blue eggs hatch - ing, With bright eyes

watching, Little brown mother, You sit on your nest.

BIRD.  
 Oh! pass me blind - ly, Oh! spare me kind - ly,

\*\* This little song may be sung by one voice, or by any number. If several voices sing, one should take the part marked "Child," another that marked "Bird," and the whole number should join in the "Chorus," the upper line (marked "Child") being taken by the most powerful voice. If the "Chorus" be found too difficult, the upper line may be sung by the whole.—A. Ewing.

Pi - - ty my ter - ror, And leave me to rest.

CHILD. *Lento, e piano* . . . . .

Hush! hush! hush! 'Tis a poor mo-ther thrush.  
CHORUS OF CHILDREN (*ad libitum*).

Hush! hush! hush! 'Tis a poor mo-ther thrush.

*Lento, e piano.*

*mf a tempo.* *f*  
When the blue eggs hatch, the brown birds will sing; This is a  
*mf a tempo.* *f*  
When the blue eggs hatch, the brown birds will sing; This is a  
*mf a tempo.* *f*

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems. The first system has three staves: a vocal staff (treble clef, key of D major) with the lyrics "promise, a pro-mise made in the spring.", a piano accompaniment staff (treble clef) with the lyrics "promise, a pro-mise made in the Spring.", and a grand piano staff (treble and bass clefs). The second system also has three staves: a vocal staff with the lyrics "made in the Spring.", a piano accompaniment staff with the lyrics "made in the Spring.", and a grand piano staff. The piano part features a prominent melody in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

(CHILD.) • Five speckled thrushes  
In leafy bushes  
Singing sweet songs to the hot Summer sky.

(BIRDS.) In and out twitting,  
Here and there flitting,  
Happy is life as the long days go by.

CHORUS.

Hush! hush! hush!  
'Tis the song of the thrush:  
Hatch'd are the blue eggs; the brown birds do sing—  
Keeping the promise made in the Spring.



### "WHEN GOD WILLS."

SUCH was the device of one William, of Henneberg, Prince, and Count of the Holy Roman Empire; of whom we know nothing now, but that it is long since he went to his rest:—a grafted tree with the motto, "When God Wills."

Yes! "when God wills." Meantime all we see here is a polled tree, its branches disfigured by lumps of clay. The skilled workman has gone his way, his own share in the matter is over, and he knows well that, though he has "proposed" and laboured accordingly—God must "dispose" at last. The tree stands there alone now, waiting the working of the mysterious law within. And that, so tended and cultured, it should one day bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit, might well be the gardener's reasonable hope when he left it:

but which graft, if any, shall succeed, and which, if any, shall fail, it is beyond his province to determine, and out of all reason to fret about.

Let those who labour in the moral world take the lesson to heart. Churchmen, statesmen, parents, teachers—it speaks alike to all who labour for the good of others, *i.e.*, for the ingrafting of a higher law into a degenerated nature. See that you use the means appointed; see that you have not your own indifference or negligence to blame for failure. But then be satisfied and go your way—it is not for you to know the times, and the seasons. "When God wills" the fruit will appear.

"The work its master glorifies,  
The blessing cometh from the skies."

## WOODEN LEGS.

TWO children sat in the twilight,  
Murmuring soft and low,  
Said one, "I'll be a sailor-lad,  
With my boat ahoy! yo ho!  
For sailors are most loved of all,  
In every happy home,  
And tears of grief or gladness fall  
Just as they go or come."

But the other child said sadly,  
"Ah, do not go to sea,  
Or in the dreary winter nights  
What will become of me?  
For if the wind began to blow,  
Or thunder shook the sky,  
Whilst you were in your boat, yo  
ho!  
What could I do but cry?"

Then he said, "I'll be a soldier,  
With a delightful gun,  
And I'll come home with a wooden  
leg,  
As heroes have often done."  
She screams at that—and prays and  
begs,  
While tears—half anger—start,  
"Don't talk about your wooden legs,  
Unless you'd break my heart!"

He answered her rather proudly,  
"If so, what *can* I be?  
If I must not have a wooden leg  
And must not go to sea?  
How could the Queen sleep sound at  
night,  
Safe from the scum and dregs,  
If English boys refused to fight  
For fear of wooden legs?"

She hung her head repenting,  
And trying to be good,  
But her little hand stroked tenderly  
The leg of flesh and blood!  
And with her rosy mouth she kissed  
The knickerbockered knee,  
And sighed, "Perhaps—if you  
insist—  
You'd *better* go to sea!"

Then he flung his arms about her,  
And laughingly he spoke,  
"But I've seen many honest tars  
With legs of British oak!  
Oh Darling, when I am a man,  
With beard of shining black,  
I'll be a *hero* if I can,  
And you must not hold me back."

She kissed him as she answered,  
"I'll try what I can do—  
And Wellington had *both* his legs,  
And Cœur de Lion too!  
And Garibaldi," here she sighed,  
"I know *he's* lame—but there—  
He's *such* a hero—none beside  
Like *him* could do and dare!"

So the children talked in the twilight  
Of many a setting sun,  
And she'd stroke his chin and clap  
-her hands  
That the beard had not begun,  
For though she meant to be brave  
and good  
When he played a hero's part,  
Yet often the thought of the leg of  
wood  
Lay heavy on her heart!

EÖINEIN.



HER LITTLE HAND STROKED TENDERLY  
THE LEG OF FLESH AND BLOOD.

Page 186.



# TEACH ME.

*From the Danish of A. Oehlenschläger.*

TEACH me, O Wood, to fade away  
 As Autumn's yellow leaves decay—  
 A better Spring impends!  
 There green and glorious shall my Tree  
 Take deep root in Eternity,  
 Whose Summer never ends.

Teach me, O Bird of passage, this,  
 To seek in faith a better bliss  
 On other, unknown shores:  
 When all is Winter here, and ice,  
 There ever smiling Paradise  
 Unfolds its happy doors.

Teach me, thou summer Butterfly,  
 To break the bonds that on me lie,  
 With fetters all too firm.  
 Ah! soon on golden purple wing  
 The liberated soul shall spring,  
 That now creeps as a worm.

Teach me, O LORD, to yonder skies,  
 To lift in hope these weary eyes,  
 With earthly sorrows worn,  
 Good Friday was a bitter day,  
 But bright the Sun's eternal ray  
 That broke on Easter morn.

*J. H. G.*

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ANSWER TO CHARADE, page 121.

(À DIEU.)

## JULY MEMORANDA.



CONSIDERING the great amount of progress and improvement going on in the world, especially in scientific matters, it seems curious that we should owe the present division of our year into twelve calendar months to one of the great ancients—Julius Cæsar; but so it is.

When Rome was founded, Romulus settled the calendar, and divided the year into ten portions, of which he made March the first. Numa Pompilius, who followed, added the others (January and February), and arranged the year, by the course of the moon, into 354 days, but to these he added one more, for luck's sake, odd numbers being considered more fortunate than even ones! But the course of the moon and that of the sun did not quite correspond, and his lucky day made matters worse; so he ordered that every other year an extra month should be introduced, the length of which he left to the discretion and knowledge of the priests, whose business it was to regulate the public calendar. But this led to abuse. The *intercalary* month, as it was called, was made a convenience of. If a ma-

gistrate wanted to hold or resign his office a longer or shorter time, the priest could accommodate him by trimming the length of the intercalary month accordingly; and so in other similar cases, till, as we are told, "the months were transposed from their stated seasons, the winter months carried back into autumn, and the autumnal into summer."

It is always the mark of a great mind to put a stop to an established abuse, and this Julius Cæsar did when the Dictatorship gave him the power. He brought Sosigènes, an astronomer of Alexandria, to Rome, and employed him to re-arrange the calendar itself in conformity with the Egyptian plan, by the course of the sun instead of the moon, and so do away with the necessity of the mischievous intercalary month. And thus the Julian year, which is our year, was a solar year, and began in January. Under the former system, when March was the first month, it was called Quintilis, from being the fifth; but in honour of Julius Cæsar, who was born in it (12th July, B.C. 100) it was now called *Julius*, whence our *July*.

Whether Cæsar himself or his successors after his death made this change is not certain: probably the latter, for vanity was no part of the great Dictator's character.

Among the Athenians July was the first month of the year, and in it every fourth season were celebrated the Olympic games, the greatest festival of Greece.

As to the Saxons.

"July was of them called *Heu-monat*, or *Hey-monat*, that is to say, Hey-moneth, because therein they usually mowed and made their hay harvest." (Verstegan.)

622. July 16. The beginning of the Muhammadan Era. On that day Muhammad and his disciples were driven from Mecca by the magistrates, who feared an insurrection, and having retreated to Medina, opened at once his career of soldier and prophet, forbidding his disciples to discuss his doctrines with strangers, or answer any objections except by the sword. Owing to the event which caused this decisive outbreak, the Muhammadans called their Era the "Hegira" or Flight, dating it from the day of their expulsion out of Mecca (July 16, 622).

Muhammad Mohammed Aboul Kassem Ben Abdallah (or Mahomet, father of Cassem and son of Abdallah) was born at Mecca, November, 570, or April, 571, and died at Medina June 8, 632, being sixty-two or sixty-three years old. It is said that he had suffered for some years from the effects of a poison introduced into a shoulder of mutton by a Jew who wished to test his prophetic skill; and although the mischief was discovered in time to prevent his death, his constitution was destroyed by the shock. The immediate cause of his death was fever. He died in the eleventh year of the Hegira, and the twenty-third of his assumption of the prophetic character. After his death it was disputed whether he had died at all, many of his followers insisting that the Almighty would never permit so great a prophet to leave the world by the "common death of all men;" that he was "translated," therefore, as Enoch and Elias had been.

An equally groundless report arose afterwards with respect to his body. Some of the

"faithful" believed that it reposed in an iron coffin which was held suspended in the air underneath the dome of the Mosque at Medina by loadstones fixed in the roof.

Others say that he is laid in the tomb of Aisha, his wife. This tomb, being an urn of stone, is set in a chapel within the mosque at Medina, which no one can enter, because it is surrounded with strong iron bars. But most of the statements connected with Muhammad are so mixed up with fable that it is very difficult to know what to believe. The one thing which is certain is that "The town of Medina, which had afforded him a retreat in his exile, became the seat of the empire he founded, and afforded him at last a burial place in the same mosque, and under the same desk where he was wont to preach every Friday. And it is in the same mosque that the tomb of this false prophet is still worshipped by all the pilgrim mussulmans on their return from Mecca. "And by them it is generally called *Raoudhat Scherif*, that is, *the illustrious and noble garden*—the tombs of Muhammadans having generally the title of gardens or parterres from being often situated in such places. We give this from D'Herbelot. The character of Muhammad, like that of all geniuses, is a great mystery; probably was so even to himself. Of his intellectual abilities, at any rate, there is no doubt; nor that, in forming his religious code, he used them with skill unprecedented in appealing to all the prejudices as well as wants and wishes of human nature as it existed in his own country. And, being himself of remote Ishmaelitish descent, acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures, and prepared to lay hold of the good whenever it suited his purpose, he was able to draw up a system of faith in which the most solemn truths and the most absurd falsehoods were so ingeniously intermingled, that it needed a head as hard as his own to separate them. We mention this as one probable cause of the great difficulty of converting a Muhammadan to Christianity. They acknowledge only one God, like ourselves; they believe that Jesus Christ was a good man and a prophet, but they were told, and believe it, that Muhammad was *the Prophet—Al Nabi*. "There is but

one God, and Mahomet is his prophet," being their common cry, as anyone may know who has read the enchanting pages of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

1099. July 15. Jerusalem was taken by the first Crusaders. It is difficult in these days of practical advance, but suppressed imagination, to realize the fact that once upon a time a poor hermit, with neither money, rank, nor power of any sort but what came from within—a fervid piety and high-wrought enthusiasm—succeeded in rousing all Christian Europe to take up arms in one common cause: the rescuing the city of Jerusalem from the hands of its then Turkish rulers. And this he accomplished simply by going about from town to town and village to village preaching!

It was a wonderful fact, as we must admit if we consider what would be the result of such an attempt at the present day. How far the Kings, Lords, or Commons of the nineteenth century would listen to the rhapsodies of an itinerant preacher, who should travel from country to country, and capital to capital, requesting the different nations of the earth to join in putting down some common evil by a common war!

But the tone of mind in the eleventh century was very different from ours now, and the story of Peter the Hermit and the first crusade is a very wholesome one to recall.

From very early times the Holy Land was naturally an object of deep interest to the growing Christian population of the west, and pilgrimages to it were frequent. And during the nearly six centuries that Judæa was under the Roman empire, these pilgrimages were accomplished with no more than the usual difficulties of distant travel. Even under the Muhammadan (Arabian) rule which followed (637), sufficient toleration was granted to Christian visitors. The Khalifs of Bagdad even protected them; and the celebrated Haroun Al Raschid and Charlemagne came to the most chivalrous and friendly understanding

when the more savage race of Turks had overrun, and got the upper hand in the country, and taken and sacked Jerusalem, a system of oppression and persecution of the Christians was established which filled the western world with indignation, and made the pious pilgrimages of the faithful dangerous and often useless. So much gold was demanded for permission to enter the city, that it was a common thing for poor weary travellers—arriving wounded, and sick perhaps from ill-usage—to be turned away from the gates, without a hope of ever getting back alive to tell the tale.

Still the pilgrimages continued, for they soon came to be considered a work of merit as well as sentiment; and in the tenth century their number was greatly increased by an idea which was afloat then that the Day of Judgment was at hand. People rushed to the dangers and self-denials of a journey to the east, as the most acceptable penance they could undertake for the expiation of their sins, and the securing their restoration to the favour of God.

It was at this crisis that Peter the Hermit, of whom nothing certain is known, but that he was a gentleman of Amiens, who became first a soldier, afterwards a priest, and had lived for some time as an ascetic recluse, undertook in his turn to visit the scene of the Saviour's sufferings and death; and being one of those who reached it without injury, and had gold sufficient to pay the entrance fee, he was admitted within the gates,—those who let him in little thinking they were opening the door to the avenger of blood! The admission of that one travel-stained wanderer sealed the doom of Turkish dominion.

Our readers may refer to G. P. R. James' "History of Chivalry" for pleasantly-written further details. We can only briefly mention here that after observing with a heart torn with grief and indignation the cruelty and oppression to which his brethren were subjected by the pagans, Peter caught an audience

Thus fully informed, therefore, and with an urgent letter from the Greek patriarch in confirmation of his own convictions, Peter returned to Europe and made his appeal to the Pope. The evil was a disgrace to the whole Christian world. Peter demanded the Pope's assistance for its redress.

And thus the fire was lit. The Pope (Urban II.) was moved at once to promise his aid, and Peter obtained from him the sanction of his commission to go through Europe preaching a war crusade for the deliverance of the Holy City. Deliverance of the Holy City and vengeance on the Turk—the two cries went out together; the double vow was taken, and both purposes were eventually accomplished; the latter, unhappily, in a manner one shudders to recall. But those were dark ages, and the spirit of violence was abroad, and mixed itself up even with the holiest efforts of Christian zeal.

There is no space, however, to enter on such a subject as this. What remains an astonishment to all time is the effect of Peter's eloquence throughout Europe. It acted like an inspiration, setting on fire the minds and hearts of all hearers, till not only men of every rank and condition, but even women and mere children, pressed forward to answer the call. National jealousies were suspended; national politics, such as they were then, ceased to interest; from city to city and country to country one idea took possession of every mind—Deliverance of the Holy City and vengeance on the Turk!

Pope Urban meantime was true to his word. At a great council at Clermont, originally called for other matters, he appeared in public in a large square of the town, and addressed the assembled multitude of clergy and laity on the exciting subject. He was an eloquent man, too, and by an appeal directed powerfully to the imagination, piety, and hopes of his hearers—for he offered a plenary indulgence to all who joined the good cause—he carried the whole crowd with him in its favour. "God wills it! God wills it!" was shouted on all sides; and these words became afterwards one of the battle-cries of the Crusaders.

The Pope's speech was a very wise one, for he gave the people excellent advice as to who was and was not fit to join the expedition; but this part of his exhortation was but imperfectly attended to. The enthusiasm of the Crusaders soon bordered on frenzy, and no one would listen to prudential considerations. One order however was strictly obeyed. Each man who entered upon the crusade was to bear the sign of the cross on his breast or forehead till he set out, and when he began his march this sign was to be transferred to his shoulders.\* The cross was generally cut out of red cloth and sewn on the dress, and hence the red cross became the badge of all Crusaders. Hence, too, the name itself.

The council of Clermont was held in 1095, but by the spring of the following year a body of Crusaders were already on their way to Palestine: a plain proof how ardent the enthusiasm had become. In gross numbers the Crusaders are said to have numbered upwards of five millions, but of these, in defiance of the Pope's advice, there were crowds who were only incumbrances, or worse; and this especially among the followers of Peter<sup>†</sup> the Hermit, the very scum and dregs of the populace in vice and infamy claiming equally with others a right to don the red cross and share the blessings of the enterprise.

Of such miscellaneous multitudes were certainly composed the first bands which set out at different times under different leaders; and what they suffered by the way no history can fully record. Famine, pestilence, open warfare, and secret treachery did its worst, but in many cases these disasters were only the just reward of the basest misconduct; so that the historian, in looking back, is forced to the painful admission that the "lopping away" of such unworthy members is no subject of regret. Later on, the six great chiefs who were the heads of the crusade, conducted six separate armies to the great undertaking in a manner more becoming the cause. Still the sad general result was that at the end of three years scarcely

\* "Hinden auff dem Rucken zwischen beyden Schulterblat." "Behind on the back, between the two shoulderblades."

50,000 remained of the millions who had left Europe. But at last (July 15, 1099), and some say on a Friday at three hours after midday—therefore on the day and hour of our Saviour's death—the Cross of Christ was set upon the battlements of Jerusalem, while at the same time its pavements were literally washed with the blood of the slaughtered infidels; after which the leaders and soldiers, in the garb of penitents, with naked feet and bowed heads, amidst weeping and chanting of hymns, went in procession to the Holy Sepulchre to consecrate their triumph by prayer. And thus the first crusade—Peter the Hermit's crusade—the crusade of Tasso's celebrated poem, came to an end: Godfrey de Bouillon, who had commanded throughout, being elected King of Jerusalem by common consent, the other chiefs returning in peace to their different dominions.

One word more. If, in looking back on this singular outbreak of heroic sentiment, we feel incapable of entering fully into the feelings which gave rise to it, that is our misfortune, not our boast. It is owing to the infirmity of human nature that men cannot possess all good qualities at once. The practical man is generally wanting in imagination; the imaginative man is generally helpless in the conduct of life. And as with men so with nations, and so with nations in different ages of the world. And we in our age do well to look back into the old romantic past to chasten ourselves from too great worship of the realistic present. When that first crusade was started, Europe was (so historians tell us) a prey to "feuds, pillage, and massacre; castle waged war against castle; baron plundered baron; and from field to field and city to city the traveller could scarcely pass without injury or death. No sooner, however, had the crusade been preached at the council of Clermont than the universal peace which was there commanded, called the *Truce of God*, was sworn throughout the country, the plunder ceased, and the feuds disappeared."

Here is matter for reflection indeed! Much to be proud of, or thankful for, in the comparatively wide-spread civilization and order

of our own day, but something to be humbled by in seeing that, lawless as the nations were in those other times in daily life, their religious zeal was more easily roused, and, when roused, more ardent than our own. There are giant evils abroad in the world still. When will there be another "*Truce of God*," enabling all nations to join together in overcoming them?

Peter the Hermit died July 8, 1108.

1581, July 26, and 1776, July 4. Two celebrated dates in the annals of republicanism.

On the former day the people of the Low Countries published an edict, by which they renounced their allegiance to Philip II., king of Spain, and then proceeded to pull down his statues and to break his royal seal. In short, this day may be considered the beginning of the republic of Holland.

On the latter day the representatives of the United States of America assembled in a general Congress, declared their independence, and shook off the English yoke. This "*Declaration*," which was chiefly the work of the celebrated Dr. Franklin, is one of the most remarkable developments of the eighteenth century inasmuch as it furnishes the first example of a rebellion founded, at any rate nominally, upon what are called the *rights of man*.

The rebellion in the Low Countries was an outbreak in consequence of the tyrannous cruelty of the Court of Spain. The only reply Philip II. vouchsafed to their too just complaints was to send them the Duke of Alva, with orders to employ the scaffold as well as the troops under his command, to reduce all malcontents to submission. But his execrable cruelty, and the yet fiercer terrors of religious persecution, roused the people of Holland into the strength of despair. Under the leadership of "*William the Silent*," they fought and conquered, and thus was founded the Dutch republic which lasted for centuries.

One word more about July. Its Saxon name should serve to convince us that the climate of England was not more genial in those old times than the present; probably less so, as it is a sorry hay season now which does not begin till July.—ED.